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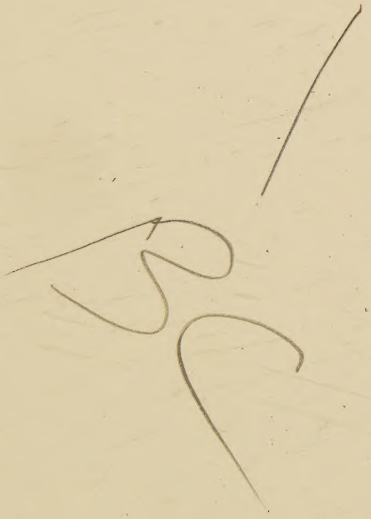

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Faith in God and its Christian consummation : the Kerr Lectures for

FAITH IN GOD AND ITS CHRISTIAN CONSUMMATION

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THE KERR LECTURES FOR 1926

BY

D. M. BAILLIE, M.A.

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THIS volume represents the Kerr Lectures which were delivered in November of last year to the Glasgow College of the United Free Church of Scotland, but it contains a good deal of matter which had then to be omitted for lack of time, and the work has been thoroughly revised. I have made use of part of the material of two articles which I contributed to the *Expositor* in 1920 and 1923, by kind permission of the publishers, to whom I desire to express my thanks.

I cannot claim that there is in the long historical Introductory Chapter a great deal of quite original research: the field is indeed so large that a student with much more leisure and learning than myself might well be glad to be guided by expert authorities to the points where relevant matter was to be found. But the facts, when brought fully together in one chapter from this particular point of view, present so interesting a situation, that this has seemed to be the natural introduction to the subject for the reader, as it was for the writer. For myself, indeed, there was a twofold approach. On the one hand, I found myself becoming aware that, amid the great variety of conception in the New Testament, the most persistently and besettingly characteristic idea, in contrast with other literatures, and especially in the Synoptic Gospels, was the idea of Faith. On the other hand, and separately, I found myself being led, in the course of long and blundering reflection upon the nature of religion, to see that the vital concept which required to be maintained and elucidated

was none other than that of Faith, which had been so embarrassingly obtrusive in the pages of the New Testament. Thus I could not have much hesitation either as to the choice of a subject for the Lectures or as to the use of a method in which the historical and the systematic treatment should play into each other's hands.

To some readers it will perhaps be surprising that more ample and positive use has not been made of the newer developments of Psychology. I can only say that, however much light the newer Psychology may be able to throw upon some of the phenomena of the religious life, it does not seem to me to throw much light upon this central conception. To others it may be surprising that the book contains no systematic discussion of the idea of Revelation. I can only plead that this was excluded by the whole plan of the book, which, after all, has its own limited subject. The subject has, of course, endless ramifications; and in putting forth my book I cannot but feel how inadequate it is to the greatness of its theme, especially in the Second Part, which is little more than a groping after truth in the face of acute modern problems. But I venture to hope that the work may be useful to students as a guide through the mazes of controversy, and that it may be found to make some slight contribution at one or two points which are among the growing-points of religious thought at the present time. I should like to think, too, that it would be of some interest to others than professional students of these subjects, and that they will not find the matter and manner of its chapters (with the possible exception of Chapter III., which they may omit, if they please, with a glance at the Synopsis) too severely technical.

The footnotes will give some idea of my indebtedness to other writers, but I must make grateful acknowledgment of the help I have received from various friends. The first chapter was read in manuscript at an early stage by

the Rev Professor John Dow, D.D., of Toronto, and the Rev. Professor J. Y. Campbell, M.A., of Yale University; about half of the work was read by my brother, the Rev. Professor John Baillie, M.A., of Toronto; and the whole of it by the Rev. G. J. R. Macaulay, B.D., of Cupar. To these I am deeply indebted for their willing help, which included many valuable criticisms and suggestions. The whole book was read in proof by the Rev. Robert Ross, M.A., of Hamilton, and Mr. James J. Robertson, M.A., Headmaster of Fort William Secondary School, and I must thank them heartily for the scholarly care that they gave to this wearisome task. I must also gratefully remember the welcome I received at the Glasgow College; and I must finally express my warm gratitude to the Clerk of the Kerr Lectureship Committee, the Rev. J. H. Leckie, D.D., for continual kindness and encouragement such as I can never forget.

D. M. BAILLIE.

St. John's Manse, Cupar,
October 1927.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE IDEA OF FAITH AND ITS HISTORICAL EMERGENCE

SYNOPSIS

" FAITH " as one of Christianity's new words.

I. The writer to the Hebrews, in the classical passage, set himself to find faith all over the Old Testament history ; but the Old Testament itself has no word for faith at all.

II. Yet the thing is there, and (growingly) the idea ; and indeed this has been singled out as marking off the religion of Israel from all other religions of the ancient world. This element of religious trust can be found even in the Moses-religion, but was definitely emphasized as of vital importance by the writers of the Abraham-stories in the ninth century, and still more notably by Isaiah in the eighth. Its development is traced through the Deuteronomic movement, the Psalter, and the later reflective literature.

III. In the religion of ancient Greece the idea of trusting in the gods is, of course, not lacking. This strain of faith is traced through the early elegiac poetry, the great tragedians, the historians, down to Socrates and Plato. But though Greece possessed, as Israel did not, a word which could be appropriated to this great idea, the word *Pistis* (afterwards so all-important in another religious environment) never came to have any vital significance for Greek religion ; and there is in Greek literature no real parallel to the rich variety of expressions for religious trust which is found even in the Old Testament.

IV. But it is still a long step to the New Testament ; and in the later Judaism which filled the interval we find " faith " becoming a regular religious term, with more recognition of its *intellectual* side (due to various causes, partly Greek influence) than was found in earlier Israel. (The Apocrypha, the Apocalyptic Literature, the Rabbinic Literature, Philo.)

V. Yet when we come to the New Testament we cannot fail to see that faith has a place which it never had before, so that this might almost be called one of Christianity's new words. The early Christians, of all schools, were conscious of this great new thing which had come into their lives, and spoke of it at every turn. And for an explanation of this extraordinary outbreaking of the idea of faith, in all the length and breadth of early Christianity, we have only to turn to the Synoptic Gospels, where we find Jesus continually looking for faith as the one thing that mattered in human hearts and lives. That was the source of this wonderful faith-movement.

It is this thing called faith, which emerged full-fledged into the light of day with the dawning of Christianity, that we are going to examine.

CHAPTER I

Introductory: The Idea of Faith and its Historical Emergence

During the last two thousand years of the world's history, nothing has been more familiar in the higher life of our civilization than the idea that there is a thing called Faith (*πίστις*, *fides*, *foi*, *Glaube*, and so on, as the case may be), a mental attitude, a peculiar kind of knowledge or conviction or apprehension or resolution, which brings us into touch with truth and with Deity, and which is at the very heart of religion. This way of regarding religion has been familiar wherever Christianity has gone; and certainly there can be no mistake about the prominence of the idea of faith in that New Testament literature in which Christianity at the beginning so spontaneously and so vitally expressed itself. It has sometimes been pointed out that at the beginning Christianity naturally fell into the use of a whole set of words which were almost new coinages, or which at least came then to be used in new ways and with special senses demanded by the distinctive ideas and experiences of the new religion. "If we want to know what fresh ideas and new convictions the Gospel introduced, we cannot do better than study carefully the new words which the first Christians were obliged to use." Among such "words which Christianity had to coin to express its new ideas," there appears the word "faith."[1] That is, of course, a very rough way of describing the situation, but it corresponds with an impression which many thoughtful readers of the Bible must have received and noted. It will be worth our while, in this introductory chapter, to endeavour to reduce that impres-

[1] W. R. Inge, *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, pp. 51, 63.

sion to a more precise form, by tracing the historical emergence of the idea of faith; and this will lead us to some thoroughly interesting observations, which may be of use to us in the rest of our study.

I

"Every schoolboy knows" that the classical passage on faith in the world's literature is to be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, embracing the eleventh chapter with a few verses of the immediate context before and after. It is sufficiently remarkable how this passage deliberately and with a variety of expressions singles out faith as the very essence of religion, the one means by which we come to know of the existence of that invisible realm on which the visible world depends, and the one means also by which we can ever make approach to God.[1] But the greater part of the long and eloquent passage is devoted to illustrating what faith is and does from the history of Israel, right down to Jesus Christ Himself, whose way of facing the Cross is named as, after all, its supreme example.[2] The history of Israel meant for this author primarily, of course, the Old Testament, with some of the Apocryphal Books for the later part of his sketch, and it is curious to note the gusto and determination with which he sets out to find faith exemplified right through the Old Testament from the very beginning. He begins with the first chapter of Genesis; and he proceeds in such detail—one would almost be inclined to say, with such ingenuity, but perhaps one should rather say, with such insight—that his list of examples from Genesis alone runs to twenty verses, and before he has finished with Exodus he has almost exhausted his space. By faith one did this, and by faith another did that; but the material proves too rich for him, and he must needs descend to a mere catalogue, or he will never come to the end of his story at all. "And what more shall I say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David, Samuel, and the prophets"—all

[1] Heb. 10^{38} $11^{1.\ 3.\ 6}$. [2] 12^{2}.

those who in the long history of Israel were able by faith to do or to endure. Yet in his final catalogue he becomes more eloquent than ever, and runs on through many brilliantly vivid verses in swift description of those who "won their record for faith"[1] in Israel between the settlement in Palestine and the beginning of the Christian era.

From this remarkable passage the reader might very naturally turn to the Old Testament for himself, and look through it again for illumination. Coming to it from the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, he would expect to find faith mentioned on almost every page.

But what he would really find is—to put it roughly and broadly—that the Old Testament never mentions faith at all. That is to say, it contains no word which can quite fairly be so translated. Even the English reader will soon make that discovery. In the Authorized Version he will find the word "faith" only twice, and a little investigation will reveal the fact that in both cases the real meaning is probably "good faith" in the sense of "faithfulness." In the one passage the Israelites are rebuked as "children in whom is no fidelity";[2] and in the other, in spite of the use which is made of it by St. Paul, and by the writer to the Hebrews in the section which we have just been considering, the proper translation is probably that which is given in the margin of the Revised Version: "the just shall live in his faithfulness."[3] It does not seem likely that faith, in the sense of belief or trust in God, is intended. The Hebrew noun here used, and its cognate nouns, never seem in the Old Testament to have that meaning, nor is there (Semitic scholars tell us) any other Hebrew noun by which that meaning could be expressed. "There is," wrote Cheyne, "no word equivalent to 'faith' in the active sense in Biblical Hebrew."[4] "The Hebrew verb Amon,"

[1] Heb. 11^{39}, Moffatt's version.

[2] Deut. 32^{20}.

[3] Hab. 2^{4}. Cf. Gal. 3^{11}, Rom. 1^{17}, Heb. 10^{38} (πίστις is, of course, the word here used in the LXX, the Greek version in which both Paul and the *autor ad Hebræos* read their Old Testament).

[4] *Encycl. Bibl.*, art. "Faith," p. 1495.

says Mr. Montefiore, "signifies to believe in, to trust in, to have faith in, to rely on—all in one, while the noun signifies 'faithfulness' rather than 'faith.'"[1] The use of this verb and its cognates, in all these senses and with various constructions, is fairly common in the Old Testament.[2] But the root is not rich in substantival forms, and those which are used seem to have every possible meaning except precisely that of faith, belief, trust. This meaning is not entirely absent, but in every case the better translation would seem to be faithfulness, or trustworthiness, or troth, or truth.[3] The Old Testament has no word for faith.

Now it would, of course, be idle to build any important conclusion upon this discovery alone. Yet it is not entirely a matter of words. It is a contrast between the Old and the New Testament which is too striking to be without significance. The Old Testament, while richly equipped with verbs of believing and trusting and relying and cleaving to God, was able to manage without any noun denoting faith or trust; whereas the New Testament would have been helpless in finding expression for its ideas without such a word. The writer to the Hebrews set himself to find faith everywhere among the heroes and saints of ancient Israel; but they had no word for it themselves at all.

II

This, however, does not mean that the writer to the Hebrews was mistaken or over-ingenious. For, though the men of the Old Testament had not the word, they certainly had the thing, and it was the insight of genius

[1] C. G. Montefiore, *The Old Testament and After*, p. 171.

[2] The examples are collected by Schlatter, *Der Glaube im neuen Testament*, pp. 555 ff.

[3] There are a good many cases where the LXX renders by πίστις, but then πίστις has several other meanings besides "faith." In one case, where the LXX renders by ἀλήθεια, I notice that Dr. Moffatt renders by "faith": Isa. 26[2], "folk who keep the faith." But even this means "the truth" rather than "faith" in the usual sense.

that perceived it and traced it as the religious thread which ran through their history. When the Old Testament is compared with the New, one feels, indeed, at once that the latter is a book of faith in contrast with the former. But if we compare the Old Testament with almost anything else, and its religion with any other type of religion older than Christianity, we shall rather be struck by the remarkable insistence upon the faith-attitude which we find in the Hebrew collection. It is indeed a book of faith, in the sense of trust in God. One scholar tells us that "faith is not among the cardinal conceptions of Old Testament religion," which is undoubtedly true as far as its language is concerned; and that "God's word is thought of rather as a commandment to be obeyed than as a message to be believed,"[1] which is also perhaps true. Certainly those Hebrew words which mean "good faith," "fidelity," "faithfulness," "troth," are very often in the Old Testament connected with the idea of obedience to God's commands; and the idea of "belief" in a delivered doctrine is not prominent, because Israel had not, for the most part, arrived at the stage of reflection in which the general question of the truth or falsity of one's religion is raised. Yet the idea of religiously believing God's promises is by no means absent, and the idea of trusting in God is so prominent as to be quite determinative for Old Testament religion, perhaps its chief mark.

That is precisely what is contended by the American scholar Professor W. H. P. Hatch, who some years ago made a useful contribution to the subject in a modest little monograph.[2] Professor Hatch pointed out that in contrast with pagan religions the most striking and distinctive thing about the religion of ancient Israel is its emphasis on the attitude of trust in God. The God of Israel "was conceived in such a way that he could be loved and trusted; and from that early period in which the oldest stratum of the Old Testament was written, on through the centuries

[1] W. Morgan in *Encycl. of Rel. and Ethics*, vol. iv. p. 689.

[2] W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith in its Relation to Jewish and Hellenistic Religion*, 1917.

that followed, trust in Jahveh was the most vital element in Hebrew and Jewish piety." [1] As for Greek religion, "faith, as a principle of religion, was quite unknown in the state worships," [2] and though the Mysteries are in a different category, "faith was by no means the basic principle of the mystery cults." [3] We shall return later to the consideration of Greek religion. But meanwhile we may note that this distinction and contrast of Professor Hatch's was approved by another distinguished scholar, Professor E. F. Scott, and hailed as a new contribution. "The clear discrimination between the Hebraic attitude to God and that which obtained in the pagan religions is particularly valuable. It has never, to my knowledge, been pointed out before that the idea of faith was native to Hebrew piety, and has no real parallels elsewhere." [4]

It will be worth our while to illustrate somewhat fully the emergence of the idea of faith or trust in the religion of ancient Israel. We need not attempt to deal with the obscure period of origins, beset with controversy as that part of the subject is. But if there is any truth at all in the theory associated with the names of Stade and Budde regarding what Moses did for the religion of Israel,[5] then the distinctive thing about that religion was that from the time of the Exodus it was a "covenant" religion. Israel's relation to Jahveh was not simply a natural racial relation (as in the case of the religion of other peoples), but a relation of mutual choice, fidelity, and trust, guaranteed by a great deliverance.[6] Thus from that early period there was something distinctive in the religion of Israel, and it was a kind of trust between the people and their God.

But far more than the name of Moses, the name of

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 1, 2. [2] P. 68. [3] P. 81.

[4] *Amer. Journal of Theology*, April 1918, in a review of Professor Hatch's book.

[5] See Professor A. S. Peake's admirable little booklet, *The Religion of Israel*, pp. 12 ff.

[6] Baron von Hügel finds in the religion of Moses "an absolute trust in God" (*Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (First Series), p. 73).

Abraham is connected with the idea of faith. In this case there can, of course, be no question of going back, in our inquiry, into the mists of that dim patriarchal past where the figure of Abraham himself stands, but only to the period in which our earliest records about him, with their appreciation of his faith, are presumed to have been written. It was probably in the early days of the Hebrew Monarchy that those stories were written down which tell us of how Abraham set out from Ur of the Chaldees into the unknown, in obedience to the divine command and in reliance on the divine promise, and of how, long afterwards, he did an even more difficult thing, in utter obedience and reliance, when he set about offering up Isaac, upon whom all his hope was set, in sacrifice. The narrators of these stories in Genesis 12 and 22 do not speak expressly of faith; but the stories are told in such a way as to leave no room for doubt that in those early days of the Monarchy the people or their teachers reverenced Abraham's memory precisely because he had absolutely trusted God in the most testing circumstances. The really classical passage about the faith of Abraham, however, is in Gen. 15, and here the lesson is definitely pointed. This is the passage in which God promises Abraham a son long after it has become ordinarily impossible that he should have one. Scholars have somewhat broken up the passage into different literary strata, but the part which is important for our purpose probably belongs to that same early stratum with which we have been dealing, and may therefore be dated in the early days of the Monarchy, probably in the ninth century B.C. "And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. . . . And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it unto him for righteousness."[1] There we have the clearest recognition that to believe God, to trust in Him, to rely absolutely upon Him, is a thing which is of the essence of

[1] Gen. $15^{3.\ 4.\ 6}$.

religion.[1] The influence of this passage runs right through the later history of the idea of faith in Israel, and in the Christian Church too. Thus it might be said that this passage by a nameless author laid the foundation of a good deal of the religious thinking of the world, or at least provided one of those rare illustrations which become part of the common and indispensable property of all future thought.

That contribution was made by some unknown member or members of what critics call the Prophetic schools of Judah.[2] We now come to a still more notable contribution which was made, not by some nameless prophet or historian, but by the great prophet Isaiah, who flourished in the latter half of the eighth century B.C., and whose name is one of the great names in the world's religious history. According to one distinguished scholar, Bernhard Duhm, Isaiah was absolutely a pioneer in this matter of faith, and was the very first in Israel's history to single out the believing attitude as a vital one in relation to God, and indeed the first to speak explicitly of "believing" at all. But whether that can be maintained or not, Isaiah is certainly the earliest teacher in Israel in whose teaching we can find a counsel of faith repeatedly occupying a distinct and prominent place.

The first occasion on which we find him giving this counsel was in an interview with Ahaz his king, an interview which, it has been said, "marks another of those

[1] According to Dr. Moffatt's translation, God "counted his trust as real religion."

[2] We may note in passing three other interesting passages in which "believing" is mentioned (though with a different form of the verb from that used in Gen. 15^6), all of them from the Prophetic schools of either Judah or Ephraim, and thus not later than the middle of the eighth century: "Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed" (Ex. $4^{30f.}$). "And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord: and they believed in the Lord, and in his servant Moses" (Ex. 14^{31}). "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them?" (Num. 14^{11}).

decisive moments in the history of religion." [1] It was about the year 735 B.C. The kingdom of Judah was threatened by grave danger from outside, and the policy of the king was to appeal to the Assyrian Empire for protection, which practically meant placing Judah in a position of servitude to that Empire. To Isaiah this policy seemed a hopeless one, panicky and opportunist, both politically unwise and religiously unworthy. It was a faithless policy, and his persistent and urgent advice to Ahaz was to have faith in God. We need not stop to discuss how much of political sagacity was in his counsel; but it certainly was a counsel of faith, and was given as such: faith in God, as opposed to servile fear and panic and opportunism. The famous sentence in which the word "believe" actually occurs runs as follows in the English Bible: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." [2] "And there," says Duhm, "so far as we know, for the first time in Israel's religious history, is found the expression which was later to have such a mighty significance, the expression 'to believe.' Earlier writers do not use it even in those places where it involuntarily springs to our lips in the mere retelling of their stories; *e.g.* the Jahvist does not use it in Genesis $12^{1ff.}$, where Abraham, with faith in God's promises, wanders into the lawless and shelterless Unknown; . . . the Deuteronomist is the first to apply it with full consciousness of its significance, in Genesis 15^{6}." And thus this is a passage in which "the birth-hour of faith is described in a manner that belongs to genius." [3] Other commentators,

[1] A. R. Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, p. 106.

[2] Isa. 7^{9}. In the original the sentence has a much more epigrammatic and proverbial tang, because its two main words are connected by one of those *paronomasias* which are somewhat characteristic of Isaiah's style in his oratorical passages. Sir G. A. Smith's well-known rendering is—"If ye have not *faith*, ye cannot have *staith*." Luther's German version is very happy: "*Gläubt ihr nicht, so bleibt ihr nicht.*" The epigrammatic form may have made this a proverb in Israel, and that conjecture is confirmed by the fact that the words are almost quoted by a much later writer in 2 Chron. 20^{20}.

[3] Duhm's *Jesaia* (*Handkommentar zum A.T.*), 1st ed., *in loc.* It will of course be seen that Duhm is able to maintain this view only by holding that Gen. 15^{6} (which we, with the majority of critics, assigned to the

even if they cannot quite agree that Isaiah was the first to use the word in that religious sense, agree in emphasizing the epoch-making importance of the passage, or of the conversation which underlay it. It is certainly notable how Isaiah uses the word *absolutely*, without any object or any explicit reference to God, as if the *believing attitude*, the spirit of faith, were itself the thing that he wished to commend and emphasize. "The words mark an epoch in the history of revelation; never before probably had the distinctively religious principle of faith been so plainly exhibited as the touchstone of character and destiny." [1]

This was not, however, an isolated episode in Isaiah's prophetic career. At this time, indeed, he failed to carry the king or the people with him, and he gave them up, and resolved to gather around himself a little band of disciples who would live the life of faith until brighter times should come.[2] This in itself was something entirely new, a community of faith within the state, the beginning of a conscious separation of religion from the nation, and a deliberate basing of it and its fellowship upon this thing called *faith*.[3] But at a much later point of Isaiah's career we find his doctrine of faith again becoming vocal and articulate. It was probably in the very last years of the eighth century B.C. Judah has now been long subject to Assyria, and this time the opportunism which Isaiah opposes lies in a different direction. Ahaz has been succeeded on the throne by his son Hezekiah, and the policy of the latter is one of revolt against the Assyrian domination, in alliance with various foreign powers, especially with Egypt. Isaiah, who was formerly so strongly opposed to the policy of servitude to Assyria, is now as strongly opposed to the policy of revolt, because this again is an opportunist policy, a matter of new entanglements with foreign powers, instead of quiet faith

Jahvist writer or school) belongs to the Deuteronomist, and is thus later than Isaiah.

[1] J. Skinner, *Isaiah*, vol. i. p. 54. Cf. A. R. Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, pp. 107 f.

[2] Isa. $8^{16ff.}$

[3] See the well-known passage in Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*, new edition, pp. 274 f.

in God and righteousness. In these altered circumstances he reiterates his counsel of faith. Again we need not stop to inquire how this faith was related to political sagacity. But the circumstances of our modern world are such as to make us appreciate a prophet who kept warning his nation against seeking security or power by playing off one foreign nation against another and making secret treaties according to momentary expediency, instead of trusting in righteousness and following a policy of faith. The opportunist party had "made lies their refuge, and under falsehood had they hid themselves." "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: *he that believeth shall not make haste.* And I will make judgment the line and righteousness the plummet."[1] Here we have the same notable use of the word "believe" absolutely, without any object or further definition, to indicate the spirit of faith which Isaiah singled out as so vital. Other expressions of the idea, without this particular word, are found in succeeding chapters, in which the note becomes more pathetic because the prophet had failed to convert the king and the statesmen to his view.[2] Most remarkable of all is the persistent faith with which Isaiah himself, in spite of his disappointments with his king and people, clung to his conviction that God would yet save the faithful remnant, and thus in the latter years of his career enunciated and maintained the dogma of the inviolability of Zion. Through the terrible days of Sennacherib's invasion he encouraged the people at last to heroic resistance by an absolute and unequivocal assurance that Jerusalem would be spared; and the actual event, when the desolating armies of Assyria turned back at the very gates of the city, must have been an extraordinarily impressive testimony in the eyes of the people to Isaiah's faith, and is indeed, however the historian may interpret the

[1] Isa. $28^{15ff.}$. Critics are not all agreed in assigning this passage to the period of the Egyptian alliance under Hezekiah. Some, though not the majority, assign it to an earlier period under Ahaz.

[2] Isa. $30^{15ff.}$ $31^{1ff.}$.

whole matter, one of the most remarkable instances in history of the vindication of faith in apparently desperate circumstances. Perhaps it may be said that in this whole matter of faith Isaiah taught a lesson which his people, or at least the best of them, were never to forget through all subsequent generations.

At any rate, the idea of believing or trusting in God as an important thing in religion is constantly occurring in the Old Testament literature from that time onward in one form or another. After Isaiah's time there is not much great literature until we come to the period of Jeremiah and the Deuteronomic movement. In that period we find repeatedly the idea that what was wrong with Israel was her lack of faith in Jehovah. Jeremiah is almost reproducing Isaiah in the following passage: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." [1] But the Deuteronomic way of viewing the past history of Israel seems to have regularly included the idea that the great sin of their forefathers had been that of unbelief, especially during the period of wandering, and at the entrance into Canaan, when they were afraid to go up and possess the land. Deuteronomy has it: "I said unto you. . . . The Lord your God who goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes; and in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came to this place. Yet in this thing *ye did not believe* the Lord your God." [2] Again: "When the Lord sent you up from Kadesh-Barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you, then ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God, *and ye believed him not*, nor hearkened to his voice." [3] The same idea recurs at

[1] Jer. $17^{5.7}$. Cf. this with Isa. $31^{1ff.}$. See W. H. P. Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 8.
[2] Deut. $1^{29ff.}$.
[3] Deut. 9^{23}. Cf. 2 Kings 17^{14}: "They hardened their neck like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God."

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much later periods, notably in some of the Psalms. "They despised the pleasant land, they *believed not his word*; but murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord." [1] In the wilderness "*they believed not in God*, and *trusted not* in his salvation." [2] It is perhaps not surprising that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who in one chapter quoted so many examples of *faith* from the Old Testament, took this in another chapter as the supreme and crucial case of *unbelief*,[3] for that seems to have become a kind of penitential tradition in Israel. And the recurrence of this reproach of unbelief shows how much importance was coming to be attached to the believing attitude, the spirit of faith.[4]

The prophet of the Exile, whom we call Deutero-Isaiah, was a great prophet of faith, but rather in the sense that he breathes faith throughout his book than that he speaks of it. Faith here appears repeatedly in the form of *waiting* or *looking* for Jehovah, as we can well understand; and this is an idea which we find, expressed by different Hebrew words, in various parts of the Old Testament, from the real Isaiah onwards. Isaiah had said at the time of his disappointment with Ahaz and his contemporaries: "I will *wait* for the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will *look* for him"; [5] and there we have two of the words which are found so frequently in the later literature.[6] In Deutero-Isaiah we find: "They that wait for the Lord shall renew their strength"; [7] "The isles shall look to me, and for my arm shall they wait"; [8] "They that wait for me shall not be ashamed"; [9] and many other passages. In the subsequent literature, and especially

[1] Ps. 106[24f.]. [2] Ps. 78[22]. [3] Heb. 3[7ff.].

[4] It will be noticed in these passages, and especially in the Deuteronomic ones, how closely unbelief is connected with disobedience, and faith with obedience. That connexion of ideas is somewhat characteristic of the whole treatment of faith in the Old Testament. Cf. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im N.T.*, pp. 19 f.

[5] Isa. 8[17]. [6] Cf. W. H. P. Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 7.

[7] Isa. 40[31].

[8] Isa. 51[5]. The A.V. and R.V. have "wait" and "trust."

[9] Isa. 49[23].

in the Psalter, these ideas and expressions are very common, and the familiar examples will occur to every reader.

We are now approaching the idea of faith as simple and confiding trust, and at the same time we are approaching the Psalter, in which "trust" is such a very common word. In the Authorized Version the word "trust" represents several different Hebrew originals. But the main word for this idea is the one which Jeremiah had used in a slightly different form in the passage we have already quoted, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord." [1] And there is a still earlier example of the word in a writer rather older than Jeremiah—the prophet Zephaniah—who says of Jerusalem that "she trusted not in the Lord." [2] This word becomes very common in the post-exilic period. We may quote the following well-known passages (both of which are placed after the Exile by modern scholars): "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid"; [3] "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is a rock of ages." [4] It is, however, when we come to the Psalter that this word and this note of trusting in God become so exceedingly prominent. It is impossible to illustrate it fully in this place, but a mere glance at a Concordance is enough to show the English reader how remarkably common the verb "to trust" is in the Psalms, and any one accustomed to the use of the Psalter in public worship knows it already. The Psalter may be taken to be, on the whole, an expression of post-exilic Judaism at its best, and it became the main instrument of public worship; so that from that time onward the idea of trusting in God can never have been far from the minds of religious people in Israel. Since Isaiah's time the religion of Israel, or at least of her nobler teachers, had been moving in that direction, and the Psalter is the supreme devotional expression of the idea. Here the idea

[1] Jer. 17^{7}. Cf. 49^{11}.

[2] Zeph. 3^{2}. According to W. H. P. Hatch (*op. cit.* p. 8), this is the earliest occurrence of the word in the Old Testament.

[3] Isa. 12^{2}. [4] Isa. $26^{3, 4}$.

occurs in every possible kind of setting. The devout man will not trust in his bow or his sword, or in chariots and horses, or in wealth, or in princes, but in the Lord his God.[1] Those who trust in the Lord will rejoice in Him, they will be compassed about with mercy, they will never be held guilty, they will be like Mount Zion which cannot be moved.[2] Trust in God is the great *argument* which can be used in prayer, as a reason for expecting God to hear and answer and help. "O my God, in thee have I trusted, let me not be ashamed." "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust." "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." "Preserve my soul; for I am godly: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee."[3] We find in the Psalter, too, eager and passionate *protestations* of trust, which have always gone to the hearts of men in the midst of trouble because they so evidently came from the hearts of men in trouble (perhaps religious persecution) in ancient Israel: "I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever." "My loving-kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I trust." "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart hath trusted in him, and I am helped." "They devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God." "What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee."[4] Most beautiful of all, perhaps, is that moving appeal which is made not only to Israelites but to all outsiders who were favourably disposed to the religion of Jehovah (as "God-fearers"): As for the idols of the heathen, "They that make them are like them; so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. The Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us: he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron;

[1] See Ps. 20^{7} 44^{6} 49^{6} $118^{8.9}$.
[2] See Ps. 13^{5} 32^{10} 33^{21} 34^{22} 125^{1}.
[3] See Ps. 25^{2} 143^{8} 22^{4} 86^{2}.
[4] See Ps. 52^{8} 144^{2} 28^{7} $31^{13.14}$ 56^{3}.

he will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great." [1]

We have seen that some of those expressions of trust arose out of seasons of trouble and suffering, and indeed the troubles and sufferings of the nation or of the godly seem to run as a perplexing theme through a large part of the literature of the Old Testament. This becomes especially plain in the later and more reflective literature, where the intellectual side of faith is forced to become more prominent because of the strain put upon it by the apparent anomalies of human existence, such as the sufferings of the godly (man or nation) alongside of the prosperity of the ungodly (men or nations). The Book of Job is the most notable example, and it is here that we find the famous saying, " Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him (wait for him)." [2] It is in face of the same problem that one of the Psalmists gives this well-known counsel of faith : " Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him ; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall make thy righteousness go forth as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him : fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." [3] In view of these problems of the apparent injustice of the divine government, Judaism endeavoured to work out a kind of apologetic for its faith. Yet the intellectual side of faith never received a very clear expression. It would hardly have occurred to a devout Israelite, even in the later reflective age, to speak of the *existence* of God as a matter of faith. Even their scepticism was not so much a denial or doubt of God's existence—that was beyond their horizon and alien to their genius—as a doubt of God's really knowing and caring. One Psalmist, who was almost carried off his feet by the problem of the prosperity of the godless and the sufferings of the godly, tells us that good folk in their perplexity were beginning to ask, not " Is there a God ? " but " How doth God know ? and is there knowledge in the Most High ? " [4] That is an excellent illustration of how,

[1] Ps. 115^{8-13}. [2] Job 13^{15}. [3] Ps. 37^{5-7}. [4] Ps. 73^{11}.

even in that reflective age, when faith came to include an intellectual conviction which might be thought out and justified against scepticism, there was still no idea of the whole body of religious truth, the very existence of God, being a matter of faith, a thing which might be doubted or denied, but which by faith we accept and believe. It was reserved for a later development to arrive at that idea.[1] But a step towards it was taken in those later reflective passages of the Old Testament in which faith is seen consciously struggling against the appearance of neglect in the divine government of the world.

In this place, however, we cannot wander so far afield as to trace the reflection in Israel on these problems. Nor would it serve our present purpose: which has been, not to see how faith solved its problems, but simply to discover how far religion came to be conceived as a matter of faith in God, a believing, trusting attitude. And though we began by contrasting the Old Testament with the New in this respect, as having no word for faith, yet we have found in it a rich variety of expressions for the idea—have, indeed, found this idea developing through the religion of Israel in a way which, we might feel sure, could not be paralleled in the religion of any other ancient race.

III

That, however, is precisely the next point which we shall have to determine and to illustrate. It would be deeply interesting to turn aside and consider the ancient Indian conception of *Bhakti*, which is sometimes regarded as a remarkable parallel to the Biblical idea of faith, though it is probably better rendered as "adoring love" or "devotion."[2] But we shall here be content to confine

[1] I do not forget, of course, that Israel may in later Old Testament times have produced much more sceptical literature than any that has survived; nor that some scholars hold *Ecclesiastes* in its original form to have been a more sceptical book than it is as we have it.

[2] For reasons of space I have cut out a passage on *Bhakti*, which does not seem to be a real parallel. It is also impossible to deal with the

ourselves to Greek religion and religious thought, since, after Israel, Greece is the one ancient nation which can be regarded as having in some measure bequeathed its heritage, and in any case its language, to Christianity.

No one would dream of contending that there was nothing of the element of faith or trust in ancient Greek religion. Even in the most primitive tribal religion we may fairly hold that there has always been something of that strain. At least since the days of Robertson Smith,[1] there has been a disposition to find in the religion of primitive peoples something deeper than the *fear* which used to be assumed as fundamental—something more like friendly intercourse and fellowship, love and trust; and this is now recognized by investigators of various schools.[2] In the literature of the ancient Greeks, at all events, it is easy to trace something of the spirit of religious confidence and trust in the gods. "The language in which we are bidden to put our trust in them," says Adam, speaking of the early lyric and elegiac poetry, "is not unfrequently steeped in religious feeling."[3] And he quotes from Theognis: "Pray to the Gods: with the Gods is might, surely without the Gods is neither evil nor good to men";[4] and from Archilochus: "Trust all to the Gods; many a time they lift from out their troubles those who lie on the black earth."[5] Coming to Pindar, Adam finds one of the elements of his religious outlook to be the idea of "a kind of Providence watching over the righteous," and quotes the beautiful sentence: "Surely the great mind of Zeus pilots (κυβερνᾷ) the destiny of those whom he loves."[6]

(much later) idea of salvation by faith which is found in the Amida cult of Northern Buddhism.

[1] See W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 55.

[2] See Jevons, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 106–7; and Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, p. 224. We shall return to this point in a later chapter.

[3] J. Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 85.

[4] Theognis, 171 f. (sixth century B.C.).

[5] Archilochus, 53. The words are τοῖς θεοῖς τιθεῖν ἅπαντα (seventh century B.C.).

[6] J. Adam, *op. cit.* p. 120 f. Pindar, *Pyth.* 5, 122 f.

But it is when we come to the great Tragedians that we find this idea more reflectively handled. In the tragedies of Æschylus we can find a very sincere, if somewhat troubled, faith in the divine justice and providential care. In the *Suppliants*, *e.g.* (which Adam has declared to be "one of the most truly religious poems in ancient literature"), we observe the faith and trust of the devout going out to grasp the divine purpose and help—that is, indeed, a main idea of the poem. Zeus is repeatedly invoked as the God and Friend of the oppressed, the suppliant, and the stranger,[1] in a way which reminds us of expressions in the Hebrew Psalter.[2] Throughout the poem we find the faith that all is in God's hands, that He may be counted upon for favour by those who act righteously and mercifully, that He looks with pity upon His suppliants and can succour them, and that it is a good thing to rely upon Him in trouble.[3] These ideas are, of course, not confined to the *Suppliants*. From another of Æschylus' tragedies, the *Agamemnon*, we may quote the following in a free translation:

> "Zeus—by what name soe'er
> He glories being addressed,
> Even by that holiest name
> I name the Highest and Best.
> On Him I cast my troublous care,
> My only refuge from despair:
> Weighing all else, in Him alone I find
> Relief from this vain burthen of the mind." [4]

In Sophocles it is usually recognized that there is a still serener faith. "Sophocles was able," says Butcher, "to look on the world in the resigned temper of religious faith, and to see its contradictions reconciled in a moral harmony by a supreme and righteous will, which has regard even for

[1] *Suppliants*, 381 ff., 478 f., 616, 670 ff.

[2] *E.g.* Ps. 146 [8f.].

[3] Cf. *Suppliants*, 395 f., 524 ff., 770 f., 811 ff., 1014. In some of these cases it is Zeus that is mentioned, in others "the gods."

[4] Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, 160 ff. (Lewis Campbell's translation). Adam quotes this in another translation.

the individual life." [1] In the *Electra* the chorus comforts the heroine thus for the loss of her father :

> "Take heart, dear child! still mighty in the sky
> Is Zeus who ruleth all things and surveys.
> Commit to him thy grief that surgeth high,
> And walk in safer ways,
> Let not hate vex thee sore,
> Nor yet ignore
> The cause of hate and sorrow in thy breast.
> Time bringeth rest :
> All is made easy through his power divine." [2]

It is very interesting to note, as a sign of the presence of faith in Providence among the Greeks, that they were perplexed, precisely as were the Hebrews, by the spectacle of the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering. As early as the close of the sixth century B.C. Theognis could cry to Zeus : "How is it, son of Cronos, that your spirit can endure to keep the sinner and the righteous man in the same state? . . . Bad men none the less enjoy prosperity, and they who refrain their spirit from foul deeds are overtaken, in their love of righteousness, by poverty that breeds helplessness and turns aside man's heart to sin, blinding his wits with overmastering necessity." [3] The problem runs right through the thought of the great Tragedians. Sophocles has it thus : "Strange that impious men, sprung from wicked parents, should prosper, while good men of generous breed should be unfortunate. It is not right that Heaven should deal so with men. The gods should manifestly reward the pious, and the unrighteous should suffer some manifest punishment for their wickedness. Then the wicked man would not flourish." [4]

When we come to Euripides we find the problem treated in a much more sceptical way than we ever found in the

[1] Butcher, *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius*, p. 158.

[2] Sophocles, *Electra*, 173 ff. (Lewis Campbell's translation). For the reference I am indebted to Adam, who quotes part of the passage in another translation, *op. cit.* 172.

[3] Theognis, *Elegies*, 373. I have taken this and other citations from that exceedingly useful selection of translated passages, *Greek Religious Thought from Homer to the Age of Alexander*, by F. M. Cornford.

[4] Sophocles, *Aletes*, fragment 107 (Cornford).

Old Testament. We found the perplexed in Israel asking, "Doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" and a parallel to that may be found in the following lines of Euripides:

> "O Zeus, what shall I say? that thou seest men?
> Or that they hold this doctrine all in vain,
> And Chance rules everything among mankind?"[1]

Plato tells us that this was a common form of religious scepticism, not to deny the existence of the gods, but to hold that they take no interest in human affairs.[2] But a much more definitely sceptical note is struck by Euripides in the following passage: "Does anyone say there are gods in heaven? No, there are none, if a man will not be fool enough to credit the old tale. Let not my words guide your judgment; see for yourselves. I say that tyranny slays its thousands and despoils their goods, and men who break their oath cause cities to be sacked; and, doing so, they are happier than men who walk quietly in the ways of piety from day to day. And I know of small states, where the gods are honoured, that are overmastered in battle by numbers and become subject to greater states that are far less god-fearing."[3] But even in "Euripides the Rationalist" there is a strong element of faith in some ultimate justice, though that faith is curiously bound up with a theological agnosticism. "O thou that upholdest the earth, and above the earth art enthroned, whosoever thou art, by surmise hardly to be known, whether natural necessity or man's intelligence, on thee I call; for along the noiseless path thou treadest, all mortal things are guided in the way of Justice."[4] Again: "Surely the thought of the gods, when it comes over my mind, lifts the burden of sorrow; but while I hope in the darkness for some under-

[1] Euripides, *Hecuba*, 488, quoted by T. R. Glover, *Progress in Religion*, p. 165.

[2] Plato, *Laws*, 885, 888.

[3] Euripides, *Bellerophon*, fragment 286 (Cornford).

[4] Euripides, *Trojan Women*, 884 ff. (Cornford). No wonder that on this cry of Hecuba's, Menelaus makes the comment: "What's this? A new fashion of praying to the gods."

standing, I faint and fail when I compare the deeds of men with their fortunes." [1] Again: "I know nothing, clear or certain, of all that men believe. Only the word of Heaven I find true." [2] And Adam remarks that in Euripides' last play, the *Bacchæ* (concerning the significance of which there has been so much controversy), "in proportion as knowledge is depreciated, piety and unquestioning faith are praised"; and quotes, in Professor Murray's free translation, the lines:

> "The simple nameless herd of Humanity
> Hath deeds and faith that are truth enough for me." [3]

If we now turn from the poets to the historians, we shall find, indeed, a certain amount of material for our purpose, but hardly as much as we should expect. With regard to the part played by faith in the determination of policy or in the preservation of morale in the Persian wars, one scholar writes: "Plato (*Laws*, iii. 699) expressly mentions trust in the gods as one of the great causes of the Greek victory. And the truth of his statement must come home powerfully to every reader of Herodotus." [4] But the passages to which he refers perhaps hardly warrant such a judgment.[5] Certainly religion, in the form of oracles, appears to have played an important part in determining policy; and Plato does tell us that the Athenians were guided, among other things, by the reflection that "their only refuge was in themselves and in the gods." But he goes on to emphasize, not precisely faith or trust, but rather *godly fear*, *reverence* (αἰδώς) as their motive; which, indeed, is a more characteristically Greek religious attitude than anything like the *trust* which we found to be so characteristic of Old Testament religion. And Plato is historically accurate in that emphasis; for, according to Herodotus, it was thus that the Athenian commissioners

[1] Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 1102 ff. (Cornford).
[2] Euripides, *Helen*, 1148 (Cornford).
[3] Adam, *op. cit.* p. 313. Euripides, *Bacchæ*, 430 f.
[4] I. F. Burns, *Encycl. of Rel. and Ethics*, v. 694.
[5] Herodotus, vii. 220, 143; viii. 143; ix. 7.

stated their case to Sparta in appealing for aid when they had refused the offer of the Median king: "*Reverencing* Zeus Hellenios and fearing to betray Hellas, we have not assented." One cannot help remembering that in somewhat similar circumstances Isaiah spoke of *faith* in God, rather than reverence for Him, as an incentive towards standing fast. As for Herodotus' own religious outlook, it is not denied that he "trusts, indeed, in the general course of providence." [1] But, says Glover, "there is in all this a good deal of wavering, and it answers to the feeling of the age." [2] In Thucydides we find the commander Nicias encouraging his army amid disaster with words which are extraordinarily hesitant and half-hearted as regards any faith in a God or gods. "My days have been passed in the performance of many a religious duty, and of many a just and blameless action. Therefore my hope of the future remains unshaken, and our calamities do not appal me as they might. Who knows that they may not be lightened? For our enemies have had their full share of success, and if our expedition provoked the jealousy of any god, by this time we have been punished enough. . . . We may, therefore, begin to hope that the gods will be more merciful to us; for we now invite their pity rather than their jealousy." [3]

The above passage is perhaps intended by Thucydides as illustrating the indecisive character of Nicias in particular; but it may remind us of two very notable characteristics of the Greek religious outlook which in themselves would make it difficult for the idea of trust in the gods to emerge into clear light. The one, which we shall mention merely in passing, is the traditional idea (criticized by Æschylus as well as by Plato [4]) of the *envy* of the gods, the divine jealousy, which tended to bring misfortune in the end upon any human being who was unduly successful or prosperous. The other is the curiously Greek idea that

[1] Butcher, *op. cit.* p. 158. [2] Glover, *op. cit.* p. 155.

[3] Thucydides, vii. 77 (B. Jowett's translation, included in Cornford selection).

[4] Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, 749 ff. (Adam, *op. cit.* p. 157); Plato, *Timæus*, 29.

Hope is an evil rather than a blessing. This is particularly interesting for our present comparative study, for we cannot forget what a very close connexion there is in both the Old and the New Testament between faith and hope. In Biblical religion, indeed, they are inseparable: faith is "the assurance of things hoped for," and hope is a large part of religion. But for the Greeks, hope was a delusive and dangerous thing, making sport of human life and leading men on recklessly after the unattainable.[1] Therefore faith tended to be a somewhat fatalistic resignation, which did not allow its possessor to expect much from God.

And, indeed, though we have now scanned a large number of passages from Greek literature in which there is something of a genuine religious attitude of devout faith and trust, yet we cannot but feel that there is here nothing at all comparable with the spirit of faith and trust which we found in such a variety of moving and beautiful expressions in the religion of Israel.

We have still, however, to consider the two noblest of the religious teachers of Greece—Socrates and Plato. When we turn to Socrates from almost anything else in Greek literature and history, we feel that we are in the presence of a singularly deep and true religious life; and here, more clearly than anywhere else in all our Greek material, religion appears in the form of faith or trust in God. Not that we find such words used. But there could hardly be a better example of faith than the spirit in which Socrates faced his death. It is a curiously ironical fact that the capital charge against such a man should have been that of not believing in the gods. But at least that charge drew from him a confession of faith which we might otherwise never have had in so explicit a form. In the *Apology* we find him saying (and there is no reason to doubt the substantial truth of the report): "It would be very strange conduct on my part if I were to desert my post now from fear of death or any other thing, when God has commanded

[1] It was, I think, Butcher who first emphasized this, and he gives a very interesting selection of illustrative passages and references (*op. cit.* pp. 160 ff.).

me, as I am persuaded that He has done, to spend my life in searching for wisdom, and in examining myself and others. That would, indeed, be a very strange thing: and then certainly I might with justice be brought to trial for not believing in the gods: for I should be disobeying the oracle, and fearing death, and thinking myself wise when I was not wise." [1] "Meletus and Anytus can do me no harm: that is impossible: for I am sure that God will not allow a good man to be injured by a bad one." [2] "This thing that has come upon me must be a good: and those of us who think that death is an evil must be mistaken. I have clear proof that that is so; for my accustomed sign would certainly have opposed me, if I had not been going to fare well." [3] "And you, too, judges, must face death with a good courage, and believe this as a truth, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. His fortunes are not neglected by the gods; and what has come to me to-day has not come by chance. I am persuaded that it was better for me to die now, and to be released from trouble: and that was the reason why the sign never turned me back." [4] The *Phædo* breathes the same serene and beautiful spirit of faith.[5] Xenophon, again, tells us that Socrates "used to pray to the gods simply to give what was good, holding that the gods knew best what sorts of things were good." [6]

In all this, of course, though there is a noble faith, there is no doctrine or even concept of faith. And not once in all this, or indeed in anything that we have yet quoted from Greek literature, is there any employment of that Greek word, in either its substantival or its verbal form, which became so all-important in early Christianity. The words πίστις and πιστεύειν had not, in fact, come to

[1] Plato, *Apology*, 29 (Church's translation).
[2] *Ibid.* 30.
[3] *Ibid.* 40.
[4] *Ibid.* 41.
[5] We cannot here discuss the question as to how much is Socrates and how much is Plato in a dialogue like the *Phædo*, but in any case there is no reason to doubt that the dialogue faithfully describes the spirit in which Socrates died.
[6] Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, i. 1, 3.

have any definite connexion with religion.[1] But there is one passage in Xenophon's description of Socrates (quoted or referred to by many writers on this subject) where we do seem to have a foreshadowing of the future use of the word. With regard to Socrates' *daimonion* and his prophetic gifts, "it is clear that he would not have made predictions unless he had believed (or trusted, ἐπίστευεν) that they would come true. But in these matters who would trust in any one (or anything) except God? And if he believed (or trusted, πιστεύων) in the gods, how could it be true that he did not recognize their existence?"[2] The whole passage (which is full of the idea of reliance on God) is perhaps a less penetrating account of Socrates than that which was given by Plato. But it is exceedingly interesting to find that Greek word used so clearly with reference to God in a sense which *includes* intellectual assent and conviction (for that is the point of the argument), but goes far beyond it to the idea of *trust* in the gods (as a greater which includes the less). That is a hint of the possibilities of the Greek word which came later to be a technical expression for the faith which means both belief and trust. This is, however, an isolated and almost accidental occurrence of the word.

When we come to Plato's philosophy, we find *faith* (or *belief*, πίστις) becoming a technical term, but not a religious term at all. Indeed, the remarkable thing is that this faith is not exalted as the highest kind of apprehension

[1] Warfield says that the noun πίστις "had the slightest possible connexion with religious faith in classical speech" (Hastings' *D.B.*, 828). Dean Inge (*Faith and its Psychology*, p. 3) says, "πίστις is used in classical Greek of belief in the gods; generally (*e.g.* Euripides, *Med.*, 414) of confidence in them rather than of belief in their existence; but examples of the other sense are not wanting." This, however, does not mean that πίστις had any special connexion with religion. The passage in the *Medea* runs—ἀνδράσι μὲν δόλιαι βουλαί, θεῶν δ' οὐκέτι πίστις ἅραρε.

[2] *Memorabilia*, i. 1, 5. The important words are: πιστεύων δὲ θεοῖς πῶς οὐκ εἶναι θεοὺς ἐνόμιζεν; It is the word νομίζειν that is used by both Plato and Xenophon in describing the charge against Socrates, that he did not believe in, or recognize, the gods. The verb πιστεύειν comes in here somewhat casually with a further sense of confidence, reliance, trust. Dean Inge's comment is: "So a distinction is recognized which is of great importance in the history of Faith" (*Faith and its Psychology*, p. 4).

of truth, but is definitely put in a subordinate position, as a mode of apprehension which is inadequate to the knowledge of the unseen and eternal. We find it first in the *Gorgias*, where belief (*πίστις*) is distinguished from knowledge on the ground that there may be a false belief as well as a true, whereas there is no such thing as false knowledge. Thus " belief without knowledge " becomes inferior to knowledge. In this passage it is not religious belief that is in question at all, and we can easily understand the force of the argument; but, as regards terminology, it is interesting to notice how these things can be said about *πίστις*.[1] In the *Republic* we find belief or faith becoming still more definitely and technically inferior to knowledge or reason, and thus inadequate to the apprehension of the invisible and truly real.[2] In the *Timæus* we seem to find the doctrine that when we come to speak of how the world was created, we must be content with faith, which has only probability, since this is the realm of Becoming, not of eternal reality, with which alone knowledge can deal. " What Being is to Becoming, truth is to belief (or faith)." [3] Not *πίστις* but *νοῦς* was for Plato " the eye of the soul " by which God and eternal reality could be perceived.[4] " Plato's name," says Adam, " for the mental condition that takes the visible and opinable for true, refusing to penetrate into the region of the invisible, is the word which was destined to play so momentous a part in later religious thought—the word *πίστις*, ' belief ' or ' faith.' With Plato, Knowledge and not Faith is ' the assurance of things hoped for, the test of things not seen—*πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων.*' " [5]

There can be no doubt that this whole way of viewing the matter is somewhat characteristic of the Greek genius, though the facts have often been exaggerated. It was by rational intellectual knowledge that they naturally tended to seek divine truth, rather than by either moral or mystical

[1] *Gorgias*, 454. [2] *Republic*, 511 and 533 f.

[3] *Timæus*, 29. It is curious to compare this with the statement in Hebrews that " it is by faith we understand that the worlds were fashioned by the word of God." For Plato, of course, this faith was inferior to knowledge.

[4] Cf. Adam, *op. cit.* 409 f. [5] Adam, *op. cit.* 406 f.

faith.[1] And this intellectualistic strain certainly appears in both Socrates and Plato. Yet it must not be unduly emphasized at the expense of the other. Even the rationalistic Euripides, at least in his last play, the *Bacchæ*, seems to depreciate the wisdom of the wise,[2] in favour of simple faith and mystic illumination.[3] As for Socrates, while we remember his intellectualism, we must not forget the strongly mystical and even ecstatic element in his personality, which depended so much for religious guidance upon the inward "sign," the *daimonion*. But even more important is it to remember, both for Socrates and for Plato, that their intellectualism had a very strongly *ethical* tinge, and that (though they would never have dreamed of calling it πίστις) the knowledge which they exalted was very like what we should call *moral faith*. Very well known is Socrates' account in the *Phædo* of how in his youth he became dissatisfied with one philosophy after another, because none of them would take the ethical and teleological point of view in explaining the universe. To Socrates it was plain that only through the idea of "the best," only through the conviction that all must be for the best, could one hope to explain the universe.[4] Without that ethical approach, that moral faith, speculation will lead you nowhere—that is almost what it meant. And the same is true of his great disciple Plato, who made the Idea of the Good the clue to the whole explanation of the universe. Plato's belief in God was ultimately a matter of moral conviction. One writer, speaking of Plato's conception of religious knowledge, says: "It is obvious how near the conception brings us to the standpoint of Christian faith."[5]

[1] See an interesting passage in E. Norden's *Agnostos Theos*, pp. 97 f. (quoted by J. Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*, pp. 182 f. footnote), in which this speculative attitude of the Greeks is contrasted with the more mystical ecstatic attitude of Oriental religion.

[2] *τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία*, *Bacchæ*, 395 (quoted by Adam).

[3] For a discussion of the significance of the *Bacchæ* in this respect, see Adam, *op. cit.* 311 ff.

[4] Plato, *Phædo*, 96 ff. See Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, Part I., "Thales to Plato," pp. 132 ff.

[5] I. F. Burns, *E.R.E.*, v. 695.

Yet the facts which we have observed regarding the use of the word πίστις cannot be dismissed as mere matters of terminology. When Plato depreciated *faith* as contrasted with knowledge, he was doubtless using the word in a different sense from that which it had later in the vocabulary of religion. But the fact remains that classical Greek had no word, and required none, to express what we mean by faith,[1] whereas in another environment, that of Hebraic-Christian piety, the word πίστις naturally and inevitably came to be the name for the very central element in religion. The truth is that in the religious life and thought of ancient Greece (though it possessed a suitable word, and the Hebrew language did not) the idea of faith never emerged into clear consciousness at all.

It was (we may now say) in Israel *par excellence* that religion came to be experienced and regarded and expressed as a matter of believing and trusting in God. It was in Israel that *faith* emerged as the central principle of religion.

And yet, as we saw, in the Old Testament period this was never quite realized; and it was reserved for a later development to single out that fundamental attitude and to give it a technical name, borrowed at first from Greece, which would be in the Christian era the most familiar word in the whole vocabulary of religion. It is not in the Old Testament, but in the New, that we read of *faith*.

IV

Before we pass to the literature of Christian beginnings, we have still to look at a period which is highly important for a purpose like our present one—the period between the Old and the New Testament. There is nothing more misleading in the reading of the Bible than the old-fashioned assumption, which still exercises its influence unawares, that there was nothing between the Old Testament and

[1] Schlatter quotes a phrase from the *Epinomis* (one of the dialogues falsely ascribed to Plato) which it is worth while for us to note in passing, because of the religious use of the verb: πιστεύσας τοῖς θεοῖς εὔχου, "Pray in faith to the gods" (*Epinomis*, 980*c*). Schlatter, *op. cit.* p. 572 note.

the New; and that unconscious assumption tends to be especially misleading when we come to speak of the "new words" which Christianity was constrained to use for its new concepts. The Christian world has, of course, always been familiar with the "Apocrypha," most of which falls into the interval between the two Testaments. But even more important than the Apocrypha, in the whole question of the originality of early Christian ideas, are the Apocalyptic Literature and the Rabbinical Literature, which have only in recent times become familiar to students, and which have revealed anticipations or parallels of many ideas which were supposed to have been initiated by Christianity.

It is quite evident that, in the last century or so before the Christian era, "faith" was beginning to become a technical religious term among the Jews, and even a subject of religious and theological discussion. There is an exceedingly interesting passage in *Ecclesiasticus* (more properly called *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*, second century B.C.), which, without actually naming faith, deals with the relation of faith to medical skill in cases of sickness. The tone of the passage suggests that it was a subject of discussion among devout Jews whether the calling in of a physician and the use of medicines betokened a lapse from perfect faith in God. "The Lord created medicines out of the earth; and a prudent man will have no disgust at them. . . . With them doth he heal a man and taketh away his pain. . . . My son, in thy sickness be not negligent; but pray unto the Lord and he shall heal thee. . . . Then give place to the physician, for verily the Lord hath created him."[1] Throughout this beautiful book of the Son of Sirach we find at intervals a counsel of trust which reminds us of the Psalter. In 1 *Maccabees* (137–105 B.C.) there is an interesting passage,[2] which has been compared[3] with the classical eleventh chapter of

[1] *Sirach*, $38^{1ff.}$. In another wisdom book, belonging probably to the first century B.C., *The Wisdom of Solomon*, we find a passage which deals with faith in relation to the fruitfulness of the earth, in connexion with the manna story ($16^{20ff.}$).

[2] 1 *Macc.* $2^{50ff.}$.

[3] By Bousset.

Hebrews, because it moves through the history of Israel, holding up one hero after another as an example—not perhaps of faith, but rather of faithfulness. We do, indeed, read that "Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, *believed*, and were saved out of the flame," which is an exceedingly interesting comment. But in the case of Abraham we find this very significant transformation of an important ancient saying: "Was not Abraham *found faithful* in temptation, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness?" A still more striking passage is that in 4 *Maccabees* (between 63 B.C. and A.D. 38) about the martyrdom of the seven brothers. The curious thing here is that, while the whole point of the book is to extol "Pious Reason," we find all the heroism being at the same time put to the credit of *faith*. "The noble mother willingly surrendered them through faith in God." Again, after a reference to the heroism of Abraham, Isaac, and Daniel: "And ye also, having the same faith unto God, be not troubled." A few verses further down: "Thou gavest an example of the nobleness of faith." [1]

In the Apocalyptic Literature faith has a place of its own, and is closely connected in more than one way with the apocalyptic hope. We cannot, indeed, build upon the well-known saying in the *Testament of Dan* that "on the day on which Israel believes, the Kingdom of the enemy will come to an end," [2] for scholars suspect that "believes" was not the original reading, but is due to Christian redaction.[3] But in the (so-called Ethiopic) *Book of Enoch* we find a good deal about faith. "Mine eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness and of faith." [4] In one of the Similitudes, the stars which "keep faith with each other" symbolize "the holy who dwell on the earth and believe in the name of the Lord of Spirits for ever and ever." [5] In another of the Similitudes, "It shall be said to the holy

[1] 4 *Macc.* 15^{24} 16^{22} 17^{2} (trans. Townshend). [2] *Test. Dan*, 6^{4}.

[3] So Charles, *in loc.*, Bousset, *Rel. des Jud.*, p. 178.

[4] *Enoch*, 39^{6} (Charles's translation). The part of the *Book of Enoch* from which all our quotations are taken was probably written early in the first century B.C.

[5] $43^{2ff.}$.

in heaven that they should seek out the secrets of righteousness, the heritage of faith." [1] "On that day shall they raise one voice, and bless and glorify and exalt in the spirit of faith, and in the spirit of wisdom," etc.[2] The kings of the earth shall say in the day of doom, "Would that we had rest to glorify and give thanks, and confess our faith before his glory. . . . We have not believed before him, nor glorified the name of the Lord of Spirits." [3] These and other passages in the book make it clear that, in the century before the beginning of the Christian era, faith was coming to be spoken of, along with wisdom and righteousness and mercy and peace, as a highly important thing in religion, with an accepted name of its own. And yet it is often difficult to know whether it is really *faith* in its true sense that is intended, or simply *faithfulness*. There can be no doubt that faithfulness was one of the things urgently called for in those times of suffering which fostered the apocalyptic strain, and Sanday and Headlam tell us that in this connexion "faith appears to have the sense of fidelity to the Old Testament religion." [4] But, of course, such fidelity would be faith too, for in those times of religious persecution and oppression the question really was whether the good people would be able to keep on believing in their religion in spite of all appearances; and thus the ideas of faith and fidelity merge into one.

In the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, which may be taken as roughly contemporaneous with the New Testament writings, we seem to find, more clearly than hitherto, the idea of faith as including not only trust but intellectual conviction of new religious truths. "*Belief* in the coming judgment was then generated, and hope of the world that was to be renewed was built up, and the promise of the life that should come hereafter was implanted." [5] Again: "To them that *believe*, the promise of their reward, and to them that *deny*, the torment of fire that is reserved for them." [6] Religious truth is now no longer taken for

[1] 58^{5}. [2] 61^{11}. [3] $63^{5\cdot 7}$.
[4] Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, p. 33.
[5] *Apoc. Baruch*, 57^{2} (Charles's translation). [6] *Ibid.* 59^{2}.

granted: it is a thing that can be denied; it includes a transcendent apocalyptic hope which some accept and some do not, and the acceptance is a matter of faith.

When we come to 4 *Esdras*, which belongs to the latter part of the first century of our era, we find still more ample evidence that in the age of Christian beginnings the idea of faith had a recognized place in Jewish religion. Faith is spoken of repeatedly, without any further explanation or qualification, as a vital thing in religion. "The land shall be barren of faith." [1] In another place, "Judgment only shall remain, truth shall stand, and faith shall wax strong." [2] Again: "Faith shall flourish, and corruption shall be overcome." [3] In one interesting verse faith is singled out as the distinctive mark of Israel among the nations: "Is there any other nation that knoweth thee beside Israel? Or what tribes have so believed thy covenant as the tribes of Jacob?" [4] Still more interesting is it to find *faith* and *works* put side by side in such a definite way as to make it likely that Paul and "James" were not the first who discussed their relation or, at least, drew the distinction. Only, there is here no suggestion of opposition between faith and works as means of salvation: they are regarded as complementary. "Every one that shall be saved and shall be able to escape by his works, or by faith whereby he hath believed, shall be preserved from the said perils, and shall see my salvation." [5] Another passage speaks of those who "have works, and faith towards the Almighty." [6] All this is, of course, later than the Apostle Paul, but it seems to indicate a traditional subject of thought in Jewish religious circles about the beginning of the Christian era.

This brings us to the Rabbinical Literature, none of which can be said to be older than the Christian era, but which probably preserves ideas that were in the air at an earlier time, and in any case can give us some impression of what was being discussed in the theological schools of the Jews about the time that Christianity began. This

[1] 4 *Esd.* 5^{1}. [2] *Ibid.* 7^{34}. [3] *Ibid.* 6^{28}.
[4] *Ibid.* 3^{32}. [5] *Ibid.* $9^{7ff.}$. [6] *Ibid.* 13^{23}.

literature leaves no room for doubt that it was not Christianity alone that commended faith. In this extensive field we must be entirely dependent upon authorities, but we are fortunate in having two distinguished authorities who have given special attention to the comparison of Jewish and Christian thought in the first century (and without any Christian bias) — Dr. Abrahams and Mr. Montefiore. The former points out a good many interesting parallels between the Rabbis and the Gospels on this subject. "Rabbi Eleazar the Great (first century) said: Whoever has bread in his basket and asks, What shall I eat to-morrow? is none other than those of little faith." Again, to be loud and importunate in prayer is given as a mark of little faith.[1] Faith is repeatedly mentioned in Rabbinic comments on Old Testament passages, and very notably as explaining how Moses' holding up of his hands could give victory over the Amalekites, and how the gaze at the Brazen Serpent could heal the Israelites.[2] Dr. Abrahams even tells us: "The most frequent Rabbinic thought is that man's faith moves God to perform the most miraculous feats on behalf of the faithful."[1] This sounds extraordinarily like the teaching of the Gospels. Mr. Montefiore also gives many examples, especially emphasizing how *natural* faith was to the Rabbis, and how far they were from making any opposition between faith and works.[3]

All this is deeply interesting. And yet, when one considers the large extent of the Rabbinical Literature (some of it originating hundreds of years after Christ), the importance of its references to faith perhaps begins to diminish. Mr. Montefiore admits that these references occur with "comparative infrequency," and that "we meet them only when a comment has to be made upon a Biblical passage in which the Hebrew term for faith or trust occurs,"[4]

[1] Abrahams, *Pharisaism and the Gospels*, pp. 191 f.

[2] Ex. $17^{11ff.}$, Num. 21. Cited by Schlatter, *op. cit.* p. 37. There is much useful information regarding the Rabbinical treatment of faith in pp. 24–50 of this book.

[3] C. G. Montefiore, *The Old Testament and After*, pp. 384 ff.

[4] In the Rabbinical Literature, as indeed in the whole Jewish tradition, Abraham is the outstanding type of faith, and the favourite passage is the

which would seem to indicate that this way of regarding religion was *less* congenial to the Rabbis than to the Jews of the Old Testament period.[1] Mr. Montefiore explains the comparative infrequency of the references to faith by pointing out that "belief or faith in God was as natural to the Rabbis as belief in the regularity of night following the day," and therefore they did not need to enforce the lesson. Again, after giving some examples, he says, "These simple utterances about faith go far to show that the Rabbis were quite alive to its virtues, but that they largely took it for granted."[2] But, after all, living faith can never in that sense be a "natural" thing, and when it is "taken for granted," it must surely be something different from the omnipotent force which it is in the teaching of Jesus. Before the Rabbinic Literature began to be written, faith had long been a subject of reflection and discussion in Jewish religious circles. But it may be questioned whether the Rabbis of the first century quite understood and appreciated their inheritance in this respect; and it seems plain, on Mr. Montefiore's own showing, that there is nothing in the Rabbinic Literature at all comparable with the extraordinary emphasis on faith which we find in the New Testament.

We have still to turn to the great representative of Hellenistic Judaism at the beginning of the Christian era, Philo of Alexandria (about 30 B.C. to A.D. 50). Philo's works were, of course, all written, like the literature of early

story of his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, while of course the text which says, "He believed the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness," is never forgotten.

[1] Schlatter points out that the Targum on Isa. 7^9 fails to give the word "believe" the *absolute* sense it had in the original, and gives it the words of the prophet as object. A similar change is made in the comments on Isa. 28^{16}, Ex. 14^{31}. See Schlatter, *op. cit.* p. 28 footnote. This is significant.

[2] Montefiore, *op. cit.* 386, 388. It is worth noting that this chapter of Mr. Montefiore's book was read before publication by Dr. Abrahams, and his suggestions were embodied or appended. With what Montefiore says here we may compare what Ed. Grafe says about both Judaism and Greek religion, that in these religions faith was not prominent because it was in a sense taken for granted (*Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ii. 1426).

Christianity, in Greek; and the word πίστις, which is so common in the New Testament, is fairly common in Philo too. This word had undergone a considerable development of sense since it first came into the circles of Judaism after Alexander's conquests. In the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament made during the last three centuries B.C.—both the verb πιστεύειν and the noun πίστις are common. The verb is regularly used to translate the Hebrew word for "believe." The noun is used in a variety of senses,[1] and in those cases where it appears as an ethical or religious term to denote a certain disposition of man, it is sometimes impossible to say whether the translators meant "faith" or "faithfulness," though the meaning of the Hebrew would always lead one to the latter view. The truth doubtless is that the meanings were not clearly distinguished, for the Greek word in itself could denote either. But before the beginning of the Christian era πίστις must have become, in Jewish circles at least, a technical religious term for faith in the proper sense. It is difficult to say how far this had taken place outside of Judaism.[2] There is some evidence that the word had a place in the vocabulary of the Hellenistic mystery-religions, which certainly included an element of joyful confidence in the god; but it cannot be said that the evidence is either extensive or impressive, or that πίστις appears with any well-fixed and distinctive signification.[3] Nor is there any evidence that the Stoic religion made large and special use of the word, though it doubtless included something like faith in providence. But the way in

[1] Deut. 32^{20}, 1 Sam. 26^{23}, 2 Kings 12^{15} 22^{7}, 2 Chron. 31^{12} 34^{12}, Prov. 14^{22}, Jer. $5^{1, 3}$ 7^{28} 9^{3} 40^{6} (=33^{6}), Hos. 2^{20}, Hab. 2^{4}.

[2] Schlatter has a long and careful appendix on the use of the word by the historian Polybius (born *c.* 204 B.C.) as throwing light on the usage in the "Hellenistic" age. Polybius uses πίστις in almost every possible sense: the sense of "conviction" or "certainty" is common, but the sense of "trust" in a person or thing is rare (*op. cit.* pp. 565 ff.). Dean Inge says: "By the time of Plutarch, Greek thought was already familiar with the idea of 'Faith' as that which guards a traditional deposit of divine truth"; and he quotes from *Mor.* 756 B: ἀρκεῖ ἡ πάτριος καὶ παλαιὰ πίστις, etc. (*Faith and its Psychology*, p. 3).

[3] See Reizenstein, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, pp. 9, 85 f. Cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, p. 223.

which Philo uses πίστις, in places where we should use precisely the word "faith," makes it plain that he had inherited the use of it as a familiar religious term in that general sense.

But, further, Philo himself appears in certain passages to exalt faith to the chief place in the religious life more definitely than had ever been done before. He speaks of it as "the most perfect of the virtues." "It is not easy to have faith in God alone without the addition of any other, because we are inevitably united with what is mortal, and this induces us to put faith also in riches and honour and authority and friends and bodily health and vigour and many other things. But to wash oneself free of all these things, and put no faith in creation, which in itself is altogether untrustworthy, but to put one's faith in God alone, who alone is truly trustworthy, this is the work of a great and Olympian mind, no longer enticed by any of the things which are around us. And it is well said that 'the faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness,' for nothing is so righteous as to exercise a pure and unmixed faith towards God alone." [1] Again: "The only genuine and stable good is faith towards God, the consolation of life, the fullness of good hopes, dearth of evils, harvest of goods, refusal of unhappiness, knowledge of piety, inheritance of happiness, all-round bettering of the soul, as it rests its weight upon him who is the cause of all things, who is able to do anything, but who wills what is best." The same passage goes on to call faith "the queen of the virtues." [2] Bousset goes so far as to say that "for the first time in the history of religion we meet in Philo's writings the idea of faith at the centre of religion," and even calls Philo "the first great psychologist of faith," [3] a title which is perhaps justified by such curiously modern passages as those in which he discusses whether true faith can coexist in the mind with any vestiges of doubt.[4]

[1] *Quis rer. div. heres*, 90–5 (ed. Cohn and Wendland).

[2] *De Abrahamo*, 268–70 (ed. Cohn and Wendland).

[3] Bousset, *Religion des Judentums*, p. 178. So also Grafe in *R.G.G.*, 1426.

[4] *De mutat. nom.* 178–88 (ed. C. and W.). Cf. *Quis rer. div. heres*, 100 f. (C. and W.).

Yet with all this emphasis and discussion it seems doubtful whether Philo was one of the really creative spirits in this particular matter. It is a striking fact that his passages on faith are nearly always occasioned by the occurrence of that idea in some Old Testament story (and usually that of Abraham) on which he had to comment, and are thus not quite spontaneous. This is strangely similar to what we found in the case of the Rabbis, and in Philo's case, too, it has not escaped the attention of scholars. "All that Philo says about faith towards God stands in direct dependence on Scripture. That gives a close affinity with what is seen in Akiba. Philo, too, is not induced by his own experience to speak of faith and to point to it as an important part of piety, but speaks of it because the Law placed Abraham's righteousness in his faith, and in Israel's wanderings through the wilderness singled out faith as the thing which God expected of them." [1] Moreover, it has been frequently pointed out that Philo conceives faith in a somewhat intellectualistic manner, as depending on knowledge, a kind of mystical reward coming to the soul at the end of a long course of knowledge and renunciation.[2] It has even been suggested that what Philo really meant by "faith" was not so much the Biblical idea of trust in God as the Stoic idea of reliance on the unchangeable, and consequent detachment from the world, for which he appropriated the familiar word; [3] and the passages we have quoted give some illustration of this. The truth, doubtless, is that in this as in other matters Philo combined the Jewish and Greek strains of thought,[4] and thus fitted faith, which he had learned to detect and to praise in the Jewish scriptures and schools of exegesis, into a scheme of Greek philosophy. It is, indeed, highly significant that

[1] Schlatter, *op. cit.* p. 67.

[2] Cf. Bousset, *loc. cit.*; Montefiore, *op. cit.* p. 527; Kennedy, *Philo's Contribution to Religion*, pp. 132 ff.; Drummond, *Philo-Judæus*, ii. p. 320. Schlatter says: "Philo's faith is the righteousness of the righteous, Paul's is the righteousness of the ungodly" (*op. cit.* p. 82).

[3] Émile Bréhier, *Les Idées Philosophiques et Religieuses de Philon d'Alexandrie*, pp. 217–25.

[4] Cf. Inge, *op. cit.* p. 6.

about the beginning of the Christian era faith was a familiar subject of discussion, not only in the Palestinian Synagogue, but in a centre of Hellenistic Judaism like Alexandria. Yet it seems very doubtful whether we can justly consider Philo one of the real pioneers in putting faith at the centre of religion. Even if he was "the first great psychologist of faith," he was not, perhaps, one of its great prophets.

It is not difficult to think of reasons why, even apart from great teachers, Judaism should have begun to speak more consciously and deliberately of *faith* in the later centuries before the Christian era. One reason would be that the suffering of bad times tends to make faith more self-conscious simply because it is more difficult. There was much to tempt good Jews to doubt, and therefore faith became an important subject. Another reason would be that the vicissitudes of the Jewish state and the Dispersion of its people tended to separate the religion from its merely national basis. It was now one religion among others, and not untouched by the stream of Greek philosophy; and thus its truth was no longer a thing to be taken for granted, but a thing to be believed or disbelieved on grounds of personal conviction. Thus faith came to be spoken of as an important element in religion, and as embracing an intellectual content as well as a practical spirit of trust. People began to look at religion consciously from that point of view. The word became familiar in religious circles. When Christianity first was preached, good Jews at least, in Jerusalem or Galilee, in Antioch or Tarsus or Alexandria (and perhaps Gentiles too), would understand what was meant by the demand for faith.[1]

V

By this time we have found so much anticipation of the idea of faith in pre-Christian Israel that there might seem to be little room left for the notion that this was one of Christianity's distinctive and original ideas, or one of its

[1] Schlatter, *op. cit.* p. 80.

new words. And yet when we turn from all the literature which we have surveyed to the New Testament, we cannot but feel that here faith has a place which it never had before. Of course, the new religion did not actually invent new words; and, indeed, the early Christians were not conscious innovators setting up a new religion, but rather, they would have said, inheritors of the promises. And yet they were conscious that *faith* had come into the world as it had never done before. The Christian religion simply *was* faith. Paul could speak of the Christians as simply "the household of faith." [1] He could speak of the pre-Christian era as the time "before faith came." [2] He could expressly speak of faith (in God) as the distinctive mark of the Christians by which they were known amid the surrounding paganism. To the Christians of Thessalonica he says: "Your faith toward God is reported everywhere." [3] To the Roman Christians he says, with thanksgiving: "Your faith is being made known in all the world." [4] Faith was the new thing that marked off these people. It may be objected that even the Jews of that period could speak of faith in the one true God as the thing which marked off themselves and their converts from the pagans around them. But it is interesting to remember that when Gentiles became adherents of the Jewish religion, they were called "worshippers," "God-fearers"; whereas those who became Christians were called "believers." It might, again, be suggested that what Paul and his fellow-Christians had in mind as the distinctive mark was not just faith in general, as a disposition of the soul, but rather the belief in Christ, which might be elliptically spoken of as (the) faith. But this is not strictly true, as may be seen from the sentences we have quoted. Moreover, we cannot be blind to the familiar way in which Paul speaks of faith itself, often without any further qualification, as the distinctive thing in the Christian Gospel. It was faith in Christ, but it was also faith in God: the two were almost or quite indistinguishable. In any case, it was with the coming of Christ

[1] Gal. 6^{10}.
[2] Gal. 3^{23}. Cf. Inge, *Faith*, p. 10.
[3] 1 Thess. 1^{8}. Cf. 1 Pet. 1^{21}.
[4] Rom. 1^{8}.

that *faith* had come, as the vital principle of religion—so Paul would say. He begins to speak of the Christians simply as "the believers," "the faith-people," and it almost has the force of a technical name.[1] This terminology becomes still more marked and more fixed in the Book of Acts. Here we find Christianity repeatedly designated simply "the faith."[2] Sanday and Headlam say this means "the faith distinctive of Christians, belief that Jesus is the Son of God,"[3] and it is, of course, possible that in this book we have the beginning of a hardening of the idea into something like "creed." But even then it is highly significant that this was the word which naturally came to be singled out as a brief designation of Christianity. The same book speaks of how "God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles," which meant simply the door of Christianity;[4] and of how the jailer at Philippi, when he became a Christian, "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God."[5] In the Acts, too, we find "the believers" becoming still more fixedly a name for Christians. Christian Jews are called "those of the Circumcision who are believers."[6] The mother of Timothy is "a believing Jewess."[7] Lydia, when she has heard the Gospel and been baptized, appeals to Paul as to whether she is now "a believer in the Lord."[8] At a later date there is evidence that this word, which the Christians used to designate themselves, was caught up and used scornfully about them by their pagan neighbours and enemies. The Christians were "the believers," the credulous people who

[1] Sometimes it is *οἱ πιστεύοντες*, as in 1 Thess. $2^{10.13}$, 1 Cor. 14^{22}; sometimes *οἱ πιστοί*, as in 2 Cor. 6^{15}, Col. $1^{2.7}$ 4^{9} (Eph. 1^{1}, 1 Tim. 4^{3} 6^{2}). Professor W. H. P. Hatch says that "the verb *πιστεύειν* means to be a Christian, or in the aorist to become a Christian, no less than thirteen times in the letters of Paul" (*op. cit.* p. 37).

[2] Acts 6^{7} 13^{8} 14^{22} 16^{5}.

[3] On Rom. 1^{17}, in their *Commentary*.

[4] Acts 14^{27}. [5] Acts 16^{34}. [6] Acts 10^{45}.

[7] Acts 16^{1}.

[8] *πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ*, Acts 16^{15}. The A.V. and R.V. translate "faithful to the Lord." It seems certain that *πιστὴν* here means "believing," "a believer," in an almost technical sense, but its relation to the dative *ᾧ κυρίῳ* may indeed be doubtful.

had only belief or faith and not knowledge.[1] We cannot follow out that line, but it serves to illustrate the fact that early Christianity was distinguished not only by *what* it believed, but also by the simple fact *that* it believed, by its emphasis on faith.

We need not at this point attempt to exhibit in detail the varieties of the New Testament teaching on faith, since our present purpose is rather to trace in a general way the emergence of the idea. What we have to notice is the remarkable outcropping of this idea in *all* parts of the New Testament alike. That body of early Christian literature doubtless reflects different types of Christianity as well as different temperaments. But the deeper one goes into it, the more is one impressed by its deeper unity. And there is, perhaps, no better way of seeing that, than by observing how, in all its parts, the New Testament quite naturally and spontaneously exhibits Christianity as the religion of faith, hope, and love. We naturally think of "John" as *par excellence* the apostle of love; and yet the most outstanding passage of all in praise of love was not written by "John," but by Paul, the apostle of faith, in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Love was central for all of them, as it had been for their Master. Then as regards hope: we might naturally make "Peter" (as in the First Epistle of Peter[2]) the apostle of hope; or we might think of the Epistle to the Hebrews.[3] But really, if he were not already marked off as the apostle of faith, we might make Paul himself the apostle of hope, on the evidence of either Acts or Epistles.[4] Christianity was for all of them a great hope, as it had been for their Master when He said, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." And the same deep, spiritual unity becomes still more manifest when we come to faith. Faith is simply everywhere in the

[1] So Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, bk. iii. ch. iii. He refers to Celsus and Lucian.

[2] See 1 Pet. $1^{3.\ 13.\ 21}$ 3^{15}, and, for the general attitude of hope, this Epistle *passim*.

[3] See Heb. 3^{6} $6^{11.\ 18.\ 19}$ 7^{19} 11^{1}.

[4] See 1 Thess. 1^{3} 4^{13} 5^{8}, 2 Thess. 2^{16}, Gal. 5^{5}, 1 Cor. 13^{13} 15^{19}, 2 Cor. 3^{12}, Col. $1^{5.\ 23.\ 27}$, Rom. $8^{24f.}$, Acts 23^{6} 24^{15} $26^{6f.}$ 28^{20}.

New Testament, and to illustrate it as fully as we have done for earlier literatures would far overtax our space.

As regards Paul, a cursory glance at his few extant letters will convince anyone that he could hardly write a page on any religious or ecclesiastical, or perhaps any other, subject without using the word "faith." The noun occurs over one hundred times in his letters, and in Galatians and Romans alone over sixty times; while not one of his letters is without the word—not even the little private note written to Philemon, where it occurs twice.[1] There can be no doubt whatever that Paul had this word on his pen far more than any writer who had ever lived before him, and that, while he had been trained in all the lore of Jewish theology, he regarded this as in some sense a new and distinctively Christian discovery—not simply the idea of salvation through Christ, but the idea of salvation by faith.[2] For Paul everything in Christianity was "of faith." He was certainly the apostle of faith *par excellence*. Paul was the first "to bring the Church to a clear consciousness of the new significance which faith had acquired." And yet, says the same scholar, "the doctrine of salvation through believing was . . . not introduced by Paul; in his controversy with Peter at Antioch he could assume it as common ground."[3] However this had come about, faith was definitely a thing which all those early Christians had in common as part of their new and wonderful possession. The whole New Testament bears witness to it. It is, as we have seen, very prominent in the Book of Acts, whether we use this as evidence for the earliest period or (from a more critical standpoint) as evidence for the latter part of the first century. In the Epistle of James, faith appears in a way which makes it plain that this idea was an accepted possession of the Church, which no party or school could ignore. The Epistles of Peter are entirely at home with

[1] For a table showing the occurrence of πίστις and πιστεύειν in Paul's letters, see W. H. P. Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 31.

[2] See the invaluable pages on Paul's use of the idea of faith in Johannes Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*, 322–5. For a discussion of the relation of "faith in Christ" to "faith in God" for Paul, see our Chapter VII.

[3] Professor W. Morgan in *E.R.E.*, v. 689.

the idea and the word. The Johannine literature, indeed, presents a curious mixture of evidence. In the Johannine Apocalypse the noun "faith" appears, not perhaps as frequently as we should expect, but at least more frequently than in almost any Jewish work of that class. In the Johannine Epistles the noun appears only once, and in the Johannine Gospel not at all. Indeed, the Gospel and the Second and Third Epistles of John are the only books in the New Testament where the word does not occur. It is certainly curious that this Gospel, which delights so much in great abstract terms like Truth, Life, Light, should have made no use of the word "faith." [1] But no special significance can be attached to this, for the verb "to believe" is given very prominent and important use, to express one of the main ideas of the book. The same is true of the First Epistle; and, as for the noun, it is this Epistle which tells us so confidently: "This is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." [2] To crown all this, the greatest passage of all in praise of faith was written by neither Paul nor "John," but by a man of a quite different school from either of them—the Alexandrian author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.[3] It is abundantly plain that the early Christians, from the beginning to the end of the New Testament period, and in all their types and schools, were dominated by the idea of faith as the central thing in their religion. Early Christianity, as reflected in the New Testament, was a faith-movement, and emphasized and exalted faith in a manner to which contemporary Jewish or ethnic religion offers no real parallel at all. This was a genuine new beginning, a new and wonderful realization of the meaning of religion as primarily and fundamentally a matter of faith in God.

Now, it is natural for us to ask whether any explanation

[1] Dean Inge says that in the Fourth Gospel πίστις is "avoided like the other party catchwords of the time, Wisdom and Knowledge" (*The Modern Churchman*, vol. xv. p. 279). According to R. H. Strachan, the fact that only the verb, and not the noun, is used "can only indicate that the Evangelist conceives of faith as dynamic, and not as static" (*The Fourth Evangelist: Dramatist or Historian?* p. 93).

[2] 1 John 5[4]. [3] Heb. 10[35]–12[2].

can be given of this extraordinary outbreaking of the idea in all the length and breadth of early Christianity. Whence came this common insistence on faith as the one thing that made all the difference? In order to answer that question we have only to go to the Synoptic Gospels, and back through them to the ministry of Jesus, whom all those early Christians acknowledged as their Lord and Master. In this matter He certainly was the Master of them all. There can surely be no doubt that it was there that the whole of this faith-movement began. It was Jesus who discovered faith as it had never been discovered before, and gave to it a quite unlimited significance in human life and religion.

It is true that if we go to the Synoptic Gospels to look for the *teaching* of Jesus on this subject, it will not be easy to find. One scholar, indeed, can tell us that "evidence for the increasing importance that was being attached to faith will hardly . . . be found in the teaching of Jesus." But what he means becomes plain when he goes on: "Often as he uses the word, it is nearly always with the meaning of trust in the power and goodness of God."[1] That is to say, there is no discussion of faith as an abstract term. The idea occurs rather, as a rule, in very practical connexions, as occasion arose in the active ministry of Jesus. That is in the nature of the case, and if it proves anything, it proves what a practical thing faith was for Jesus. As a matter of fact, our Lord's teaching includes very little formal instruction about any of the elements of the religious life. Weinel points it out as one of the most striking peculiarities of the preaching of Jesus that it possessed hardly any words descriptive of the religious experience. He seldom spoke of the knowledge of God, or of love towards God, or in any experimental sense of redemption, or even of that typically Jewish disposition, the fear of God; for Jesus' way of speaking was much more objective.[2] But the one religious disposition which He did emphasize was faith, the believing disposition.[3] And after all allowance has been made for

[1] Professor W. Morgan in *E.R.E.*, v. 689.

[2] Weinel, *Biblische Theologie des neuen Testaments*, 156 ff.

[3] The question, of course, arises here as to the *words* which Jesus

accretions in the Gospel reports, we are left with the impression that this was *the* thing for which our Lord was always eagerly looking in human hearts and lives. If people would really believe in God, all would be well with them. And the cause of all sorts of failure and worry and fear was the lack of faith. When His disciples (fishermen, some of them) got into a panic in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, it was because they had no faith.[1] When people kept worrying about their livelihood in bad times, it was because they had not enough faith. "O you people of little faith," He said to them.[2] When people stood helpless in the presence of bodily disease, it was because of their lack of faith. When a father, distressed about his epileptic boy, said pathetically to Jesus, "If you can possibly do anything, have pity on us and help us," Jesus replied, apparently with a note of amazement and rebuke, "If you can possibly! *Everyhing* is possible to a man who has faith."[3] The lack of faith, the unbelieving spirit, was always what Jesus was grieved and disappointed to find in men. It was the one thing that hindered Him in His beneficent work of healing. When He was confronted with a faithless spirit, even He could not do much for men.[4] But when men had faith in God, they could do wonders themselves. Prayer would then become an illimitable force, and nothing would be impossible.[5] Even in His cases of healing Jesus would say, apparently, that it was not *He* that had worked the cure, but rather the faith of the patient.[6] And when He did find faith, He rejoiced as

used. His original words were not πίστις and its cognates, which we have in the Gospels, since He would speak, as a rule, in Aramaic. We saw above that Biblical Hebrew had no noun to express "faith" in the proper sense. But Aramaic had developed such a noun, and this word with its cognates, precisely equivalent to πίστις with its cognates, would be used by Jesus. See Schlatter, *op. cit.* pp. 563 ff.

[1] Mark 4^{40} and parallels.

[2] Matt. 6^{30} (=Luke 12^{28}). This word ὀλιγόπιστος, unknown to classical Greek, is peculiar to Matthew and Luke (Matt. also has ὀλιγοπιστία in 17^{20}). See the Rabbinic parallel quoted above, on page 36.

[3] Mark 9^{19} and parallels; and then Mark $9^{22f.}$.

[4] Mark $6^{5.6}$ (=Matt. 13^{58}).

[5] Mark $11^{22ff.}$ (=Matt. $21^{21f.}$).

[6] Mark 5^{34} and parallels; cf. Luke 17^{19}, Mark 10^{52} (=Luke 18^{42}).

to find a stream in the desert. Just as many of His countrymen, who professed to believe in God, did not seem really to believe when it came to the practical test (which always filled Jesus with wonder), so Jesus sometimes had the exhilaration of finding faith in unlikely quarters, as in a pagan military officer at Capernaum,[1] or in a pagan woman of the Tyrian territory,[2] and on these occasions He seems to have been deeply moved. These various sayings and incidents to which we have referred raise many problems which we cannot here settle. But if the Synoptic Gospels are to be taken as historical records at all, it is plain that Jesus came to single out this faith-attitude as a very vital one, and to attach unlimited importance to it. That is one of the chief impressions made upon us by the reading of the Gospel story.[3]

And surely it would be absurd to doubt that it was there, in the teaching of Jesus and in the life which interpreted it, that the early Christians learned that lesson of faith which they expressed in their various ways in the literature of the New Testament. It was Jesus who discovered faith and made it so central, and His followers, Peter or John or Paul, never forgot the lesson. In this respect they and their fellow-writers in the New Testament, with all their differences, are all absolutely true to their Master. It was not from the Rabbis but from Jesus that Paul learned to set faith at the heart of religion. Even the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, however much he may have learned from Philo of Alexandria (and he betrays his debt in his very passage on faith), surely owed far more in this matter to Jesus of Nazareth, as indeed he acknowledges. It was

And Luke 7^{50} would be interesting in this respect if it did not look like an addition to the story.

[1] Matt. 8^{10} (=Luke 7^{9}).

[2] Matt. 15^{28} (Mark has no mention of faith here, and his report *may* be the more accurate).

[3] Of Jesus' doctrine of faith Mr. Montefiore, the Jewish scholar, writes: "How large and simple and fresh it is, how childlike, how buoyant, how profound. It is quite untechnical; it is not opposed to works; we might almost as well call it trust instead of faith—unbounded trust in the constant goodness of God" (*Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 104).

from " Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith " that he, too, had learned this great lesson.

T. H. Green began his famous Lay Sermon on Faith by remarking that " for the word translated ' Faith ' in the New Testament it would be impossible, according to any fair method of interpretation, to assign a single meaning." He went on to admit that " between its various senses a connexion can no doubt be traced." And surely this second statement should be emphasized more than the first ; for, since it manifestly cannot have been accidental that all these writers agreed so remarkably in exalting faith as their Master had done before them, there must have been a deep unity of experience and meaning underlying the differences. Fundamentally they must all have meant the same thing.[1] But perhaps it would be truer to put it thus : the idea of faith in the New Testament unites in itself the various partial and one-sided ideas which had gone to the making of it in the earlier development. Sometimes one aspect may seem to be more prominent, and sometimes another, according to the idiosyncrasy of the writer ; but none of these is ever quite isolated ; and so we have the New Testament idea of faith. We are accustomed in speaking of faith to make a distinction between *belief* and *trust*. But really the New Testament knows no such distinction. In some parts of it faith seems to mean principally a simple, practical trust, as especially in the Synoptic Gospels. Yet even there it would not be accurate to translate πίστις simply as trust, for the intellectual element is quite inseparable from the moral, and Jesus would have said that it was all a matter of *really believing* in God and in His power and will to help. In other parts, again, faith may seem to mean principally belief in certain truths. Yet " belief " would never be in itself a satisfactory translation. The Johannine literature seems to speak in a somewhat intellectualistic way of *believing* certain truths of the Gospel,[2] and yet it was not " our

[1] In this connexion I, of course, leave out of account those very few passages where πίστις does not mean " faith " at all.

[2] See Chapter VII. below.

belief," but " our faith " which it proclaimed as overcoming the world. The fact is that in the New Testament these two sides of faith—belief and trust—are simply inseparable. It would not even be fair to speak of them as the two elements in faith—a belief-element and a trust-element. They are rather different aspects which could not be held apart. Even the Epistle of James, in its famous passage on faith, does not draw a distinction between *belief* and *trust*, or between *belief* and *faith*. In fact, it could not do so, for the one Greek word meant both. Its distinction is rather between dead faith and real live faith, between the genuine article and the spurious. In the New Testament there is no distinction between believing the Christian message and putting one's trust in it. " To believe " meant both together and quite inseparably. It was by faith that they believed the new truths of the Christian Gospel. It was by faith that they trusted in God through Jesus Christ. It was not a case of intellectual reasons for the one and emotional responses for the other. The grounds of the one were the same as the grounds of the other, for they were, indeed, but different aspects of one thing.[1]

And thus we see emerging into the clear light of day that thing called faith which has been so familiar a subject of thought ever since in Christendom, and which has always been so difficult to seize and to define : an attitude of mind, a temper, a disposition, a resolution, and yet also a cognition with an objective reference to truth and reality ; a kind of knowledge, perhaps, but a special kind, independent of some of the conditions of ordinary and scientific knowledge, and with special conditions of its own ; a moral and practical thing, and yet more than moral and practical, taking us into still deeper mysteries, and being indeed identical with the essence of religion. This rich and full

[1] Cf. Dean Inge: " We have seen how the two meanings of intellectual conviction and moral trust, which both legitimately belong to the words *πίστις*, *fides*, Faith, and to the Christian virtue which they describe, were brought together in the New Testament, never again to be divided, but also never, as history shows, to work quite smoothly together " (*Faith and its Psychology*, p. 41).

idea we have seen emerging into clear light with the dawn of Christianity, after a long and fragmentary development in duskier regions of religion. We need not trace the history of the idea further. Since then it has been an assured and accepted possession of the Christian world, and to go further with our historical sketch would be to record the discussion of faith's epistemological and theological problems, rather than the development of the idea itself. But we shall now have to turn to these problems for ourselves.

In the First Part of our study we shall endeavour to grapple with the general (philosophical or psychological) problem of the nature and basis of religious faith in general. We shall ask the question : What is faith ? In the Second Part we shall endeavour to do justice to the special problems and claims of Christian faith.

PART I

WHAT IS FAITH?

CHAPTER II

FAITH, AUTHORITY, AND REASON

SYNOPSIS

THIS chapter clears the ground by endeavouring to show that *in religious faith there is a quite distinctive kind of personal conviction*, which cannot be explained away, or reduced to either " reason " or " authority " and " suggestion," important as these may be.

I. On the one hand, *some would reduce faith*, at least in the case of simple believers, *to mere force of custom, tradition, authority*, or what in these days is called " *suggestion.*" The importance of these factors cannot be denied ; and yet nobody who believes in the truth of religion can be satisfied with such an account of the *ultimate* basis of faith. Even the historic " authorities " which Christianity has recognized cannot be taken as simply the *basis* of faith, but rather *depend upon* faith for their authority.

II. On the other hand, *some would reduce faith* (at least in the case of intelligent people, or in every case where it is anything more than custom and tradition) *to* " *reason* " in the sense of logical demonstration from natural facts. Thus faith would be *dependent on philosophy*. But the modern world is coming to see that philosophy, whenever it gives any positive theistic or idealistic conclusions at all, is rather *dependent on faith* ; so that faith is receiving even a larger place than it had in the Middle Ages, when it was so much set in antithesis to reason or philosophy. This is illustrated from Kant, Ward, Pringle-Pattison, Bradley, Bosanquet, James, Hoernlé, even the antagonistic Bertrand Russell.

III. Faith has, of course, great need of tradition and authority ; and it should not really be set in antithesis to reason either, since it is but reason's highest exercise. But having made these acknowledgments, we must in the succeeding chapters go on to ask : What *is* this highest exercise of reason (so different both from logical demonstration and from mere acceptance of authority), this innermost kernel of personal conviction which is at the heart of the faith of both simple and learned ? Why do they, both alike, believe and trust in God ? *What is faith ?*

CHAPTER II

Faith, Authority, and Reason

"There are," says Pascal, "three ways of believing: reason, custom, and inspiration. The Christian religion, which alone has reason, does not admit as its true children those who believe without inspiration. Not that it excludes reason and custom: on the contrary, it opens its mind to proofs by reason, and it confirms itself therein by custom. But it would have us yield ourselves humbly to the inspirations, which alone can have the true and saving effect." [1] It is this innermost essence of faith, this element of "inspiration" or direct personal religious conviction, this "grain of mustard-seed"—indispensable not only to the Christian religion but to all genuine religious faith—that we have now to examine. But in the present chapter we shall merely clear the ground by endeavouring to satisfy ourselves that there *is* such an element: that in religious faith there is a distinctive species of conviction, an apprehension of truth which cannot be explained either by "custom," tradition, and authority alone, or by "reason" in the special sense intended. Like Pascal, we need not deny the importance of these factors: and thus we shall also in this chapter endeavour once for all to do justice to these subordinate aspects of the matter, and to clear our minds as to the distinctions involved; but, above all, to set in relief our main problem of the nature of faith's own peculiar argument and basis. It is not desirable to begin such a study as this with a definition, but we must endeavour to make quite clear what question it is that we are going to attempt to answer.

Let us begin by imagining a simple and typical case

[1] Pascal, *Pensées* (Brunschvicg), iv. 245.

of faith, as far as possible removed from the atmosphere of the study and the schools. Let us take the case of a simple uneducated woman who is deeply religious, whose life is hard, but whose faith in God is sure. We may imagine as a background that most of her neighbours are people to whom religion means little in the real hardships of life. And we may provide another kind of contrast by imagining the religious philosopher or learned divine to whose house our poor woman goes as charwoman. He has thought out his faith into all its reasons. Yet the ignorant woman has as sure and firm a faith as he has: perhaps, indeed, when the hour of trouble comes to each of them, her faith may even prove to be stronger and more secure than his. Let us imagine that crushing calamity comes upon her, touching the very heart of her life and happiness. But, through it all, in the midst of her desolating sorrows, she remains serenely sure of God's love, of His wisdom, and of His power to make all things work together for good. What, then, is the source of this faith, of which the woman has so much more than her neighbours, and perhaps more even than the religious philosopher or the divine? On what is it based? What makes these people believe in God—the philosopher, who differs in this respect from so many of his philosophical friends, and the woman, who has still more faith, and is thus so different from most of her neighbours? That is a very broad and simple way of putting the question with which we are here confronted.

But to reduce the issue to a more acute form: many people would answer in such a manner as apparently to explain faith away. Many people would say that the only conceivable answer to such a question lies in either the word "reason" or the word "custom," as Pascal used them: that whatever opinions are not held on grounds of logical reasoning in the strictest sense, must be explained as due to purely "irrational" causes, such as the force of custom and tradition. When Mr. (now the Earl of) Balfour made his celebrated distinction between "reasons for belief" and "causes of belief," he meant by the latter the influences of "custom, education, public opinion, the

contagious convictions of countrymen, family, party, or church," all of which he summed up under the word "authority," as set in antithesis to reason ;[1] which is more or less equivalent to what Pascal meant by "custom." And many would contend that faith must be reduced either to such "custom" and "authority" on the one hand, or to "reason," in the sense indicated, on the other ; or, perhaps, that in the case of some believers it is the one, and in the case of other believers the other, according to their degree of education and intelligence, or that it is always a mixture of both : so that religious faith as a distinct and valid mode of apprehending truth and reality is explained away. Let us see whether we can be satisfied with such an easy explanation.

I

On the one hand, some would say that the faith of the simple, uneducated religious woman of our illustration is purely a matter of custom and tradition. She could not give any intelligent reason for what she believes. It is just what she has been taught, and what all the people around her profess to believe too. It was probably dropped into her mind first of all when she was a child, very impressionable and ready to accept whatever she was told ; and not only by definite teaching, but also in many more subtle ways, by the force of example and social atmosphere. That set the bent of her beliefs ; and since then, living in her narrow world, she has never heard any very definite contradiction or even questioning of these beliefs. She is one of a vast number of people all over the world, Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, and many other sorts, whose beliefs are borrowed entirely from their surroundings. If she had been born and brought up in a Mohammedan country, she would have had Mohammedan beliefs ; if in a Roman Catholic country, she would have had Romanist beliefs. If, like John Stuart Mill,[2] she had been deliberately brought up without any religion by an agnostic

[1] A. J. Balfour, *The Foundations of Belief*, part iii. ch. ii.

[2] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, ch. ii.

father, she would probably have had no religious beliefs at all. But as she happened to be born and brought up in, say, a Protestant country, and by religious parents, she has Protestant beliefs. They have come to her with all the force of ecclesiastical and social tradition, and she has grown accustomed to them until they seem unquestionable. If you asked her why she believed in God and in His love and care, she would probably reply that it was because the Bible, which is God's Word, teaches these things; and if you asked her further why she believed the Bible to be God's Word, she would probably be unable to give any answer. Had she been a Roman Catholic, she would have said, perhaps, that she believed it all because it was taught by the Church, like Luther's "charcoal-burner" who did not even know what he believed, except that it was "what the Church believes." [1] Thus it is entirely a matter of the tradition and environment in which she has grown up, and the natural tendency of the uncultivated human mind to accept its opinions from its social surroundings. That is one view of the case—that the whole matter is explained by "custom."

This type of view may be said to be on the crest of the wave at the present time in the billowy seas of thought. It is, indeed, part of a widespread tendency—the tendency to derationalize as many as possible of our mental processes, and to regard many even of the reasons which we quite ingenuously give for our opinions as mere subsequent "rationalizations" (though we do not know it) of unconscious motives which in themselves were entirely non-rational. This present-day tendency, which extends itself to the treatment not only of religious beliefs but of all other opinions too, was anticipated by the Earl of Balfour in the brilliant book which we have already cited, with special reference to those "causes of belief" which he summed up in his peculiar usage of the word "authority." "Certitude," he wrote, "is found to be the child, not of reason, but of custom." "The springs at which we quench our thirst are always turbid; yet if we are to judge with equity

[1] Luther's *Werke*, Weimar Ed., Bd. 30, Abt. 3, p. 562.

the rival claimants, we must not forget that it is Authority rather than Reason to which, in the main, we owe, not religion only, but ethics and politics." [1]

Since these words were written, this type of thought has developed enormously, and a still more modern way of putting it is to explain the faith of the ordinary believer by what psychologists call "suggestion." In its strict and special sense this term is connected with that hypothesis of "unconscious mental processes" which has become so prominent in recent psychology, and it denotes a process by which the conscious mind is made to act upon the unconscious. But the term is used very much more widely, to cover every conceivable process by which the mind is led to accept beliefs from outside without any real grounds. Apart from any particular psychological theory of explanation, the word is used in that wider sense to cover all possible "causes of belief" as distinct from "reasons"; and the word "suggestible" is barbarously used to indicate that credulous state of the mind (most fully present in hypnotic conditions) which makes it ready to accept opinions from its environment. These words and ideas are widely employed nowadays as explanations of religious belief. It has often been pointed out that many of the religious methods of the priest and the preacher savour of suggestion rather than of reasonable persuasion. The very invitation to gather for worship in crowds in a sacred building may seem to be but a method of getting people into a situation where the crowd-atmosphere and the associations of the building will tend to foster religious belief by means of suggestion; and the recitation of creeds and prayers in a monotone, the use of ritual and the practice of hymn-singing, not to speak of the more emotional methods of the evangelist, may seem to be further instances of the use of the same psychological instrument.[2] But apart from these deliberate uses of the method of suggestion, it is obviously employed very freely in the religious education of children. In childhood the mind is

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 164 and 229.

[2] See J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, 168 ff.; G. A. Coe, *The Spiritual Life*, 144 ff.

far more susceptible to suggestion than in later life; and in attaching such supreme importance to children having the right kind of religious environment even in their very earliest years, we are tacitly recognizing how much religion depends on suggestion. No religious parents would be content to let their children grow up without religious influences, in the expectation that in due time, without any inherited bias, they would come to form religious convictions for themselves on independent grounds. We should all agree that such children would not be likely ever to become possessed of deep religious convictions at all. And what is this but to recognize that faith is dependent on suggestion? Thus the view is not uncommon nowadays that this is the sole and sufficient explanation of the faith, at least, of the ordinary man who cannot think things out for himself—in short, that "faith" has no other distinctive meaning than simply belief by suggestion. Dr. Crichton Miller tells us that what the psychologist calls suggestion is by the clergyman called "perception by the eye of faith"; and goes on to give the following as one of the meanings with which the word "faith" is regularly used by religious writers—"the suggestibility which allows a fact to be intellectually accepted on an inadequate rational basis."[1] Many would say that this is the whole explanation of the case of simple faith with which we started, and that there is no other conceivable meaning for the idea of faith at all. There may be a very small percentage of people who think out all their opinions for themselves, and these have no need of "faith": they take nothing "on trust." But most of those even who imagine themselves to belong to that superior circle are really far more dependent on tradition and custom than they realize. And as for the simple believers, who are quite incapable of thinking out their beliefs or understanding their logical grounds, the faith of such people is explained as altogether a matter of "custom" or "suggestion." Moreover, many would even maintain that this is just as it ought to be; that it does not matter at all whether the simple souls grasp the

[1] H. Crichton Miller, *The New Psychology and the Preacher*, p. 110.

true *reasons* of their religious beliefs, since the main thing is to get these beliefs so firmly implanted in their minds as to be effectual, and this is done by suggestion. That is one view of the meaning of simple faith.

There can be no doubt that the considerations adduced deserve more attention than they have sometimes received, and it is well for us to do justice to them. Yet, as a final account of what is meant by faith, as a theory of the *ultimate* basis of religious belief, this view must obviously be unsatisfying at least to anyone who believes in the truth of religion. The individual's belief may be largely dependent on tradition, and thus faith may be largely a social product; but even if it is society rather than the individual that evolves religious beliefs, the question still remains as to the ultimate germ out of which society evolves them. To say that the faith of each is based simply on the faith of all, and that there is no more ultimate source or ground of all their belief, would be to emulate the famous jest about the inhabitants of the Scilly Isles, who make a livelihood by taking in each other's washing. A sociologist like Durkheim,[1] indeed, who holds that society is the only God, may reasonably be content also to hold that religious belief is purely a social product. But it is very doubtful whether, even in the primitive religions with which Durkheim mainly deals, it can be made out that the individual is so purely dependent on society for his religion.[2] As regards higher levels of religion, it seems certain that the importance of social tradition, which has often been underestimated, may also be overestimated.[3] If the faith of the individual is largely a matter of appropriating a tradition which has been received, yet the individual can also criticize and develop the tradition, and thus contribute to its progress. It may be argued that it is only the highly educated and intellectual few who can do this, by a process of logical

[1] See Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (translated by J. W. Swain), especially the concluding chapter.

[2] See on this point Malinowski's criticism of Durkheim in *Science, Religion, and Reality*, edited by J. Needham, p. 54; and Marett's *Anthropology*, pp. 242 ff.

[3] See C. C. J. Webb's *Group Theories of Religion*, especially ch. ix.

reasoning, and that at least the faith of the ignorant many must always be a matter of blind acceptance, brought about not by any reasonable apprehension of the truth on its own genuine grounds, but by the mere force of tradition and custom. But can that be taken as a satisfying explanation of the victorious, indefatigable faith of the simple woman with whom we began ? The very idea seems absurd. Such a woman has not accepted the tradition blindly, by mere force of her environment. She has appropriated it, she has made it her own, by some inner argument in her heart which has gone to meet it ; until she has come to possess a faith superior to her environment, capable of uplifting by its influence the religious lives of her neighbours, and of withstanding the contradictions of her lot. She has in some way grasped the truth for herself, upon its own merits. The form in which the tradition has come to her—Christian instead of Mohammedan or Buddhist, and Protestant instead of Romanist—may indeed be accidental ; and she in her simplicity may be quite incapable of consciously criticizing or developing the tradition Yet even such a simple soul, if truly and deeply religious, is not entirely at the mercy of the tradition, for she can and does select and interpret unconsciously for herself. Even a simple believer's faith may be better than his inherited creed and to some extent independent of its peculiarities. Of course, it is true that a bad creed may very largely warp and choke our faith ; and yet to some extent a true faith can flourish even in a simple mind by unconsciously rejecting or neglecting the less worthy elements of its inherited creed and reading into its worthier elements something better than they contain ; and all this can happen because, while the importance of tradition is great in religion, the ultimate basis of all our faith is some kind of insight which every religious man possesses in a measure for himself. We need not discuss the question what percentage of the people brought up in a religious tradition ever come to possess any appreciable measure of the direct insight and assurance. But, at any rate, this is what ought properly to be called faith, and this is what is in the heart of the simple religious

woman. Her faith is not a matter of primitive credulity, continuing to believe what has always been dropped into her mind by suggestion because it has never been contradicted. For there is in her life plenty of disaster that seems to contradict it in the most intimidating way. Superficially her life does not look as if it were being ordered by Infinite Love, and it is very hard to believe. Yet she does most firmly believe it; she is quite certain of it. There is surely here a deeper insight which cannot be reduced to mere "suggestion."

We will not at present enter upon a full discussion of "suggestion" in matters of belief, as we shall have to recur to the subject in a later chapter when we come to "auto-suggestion." But it seems worth while here to question whether the word "suggestion" can always be properly used to describe those methods of the priest and the preacher, for the awakening or stimulating of faith, which are sometimes so described. The recitation of a creed in a monotone, the use of ritual and symbolism, the persuasive eloquence of the preacher, may have little to do with suggestion in any accurate sense, but may rather be regarded as means of presenting to the mind of the worshipper a divine and transcendent reality which cannot be adequately represented in the mere words of unimpassioned prose; and this presentation is made, not to his unconscious but to his conscious mind, in order that he may see for himself and believe. The evangelist does, indeed, sometimes use methods of sheer suggestion for the awakening of saving faith; but the danger of such methods is generally recognized by religious people, precisely because, being mere suggestion, they cannot, unless combined with or followed up by something deeper, produce a real faith that will outlast the shocks of life. Not that wise religious people deprecate the use of methods of suggestion altogether: our whole life is full of them, and especially during childhood. Children are daily forming opinions for good or evil through the suggestion of their environment. Therefore, wise parents and teachers enlist this factor, together with more "rational" factors, in the service of religion—not in order

that the children may be unintelligent believers all their lives, but in order that religious truth may take hold of their minds so firmly as to remain with them until they have gradually, in later life, made it their own by personal conviction. That is surely how the best religious minds have always regarded the matter. It is worth while to quote the following from Dr. Crichton Miller, whose words about the clergyman's "eye of faith" were quoted above. "Suggestion is the principal method whereby the adult of the human species transmits to the young the fruits of his accumulated knowledge and experience. . . . Gradually individual judgment takes the place of suggested opinion, and the psychologically mature should ideally be free from the influence of authority, though in point of fact it is doubtful whether this complete emancipation is ever attained. The change consists in a trans-valuation from the source to the content of the idea accepted." Dr. Miller seems to think that it is the first stage that religious people have usually called "faith," and that the process which he describes is a transition from faith to personal conviction. But it is the personal conviction that the best religious thinking has always recognized as true faith. It has given plenty of room to what is now called "suggestion," and it has insisted on the importance of authority, but it has always regarded these as but leading and ministering to a personal faith which is not simply and blindly *based* on the authority, but apprehends the truth directly for itself.

It may be useful to point this out in particular as regards the great and historic "authorities" which Christianity has acknowledged. The Reformers based their whole religious position in a sense upon the authority of the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures. And yet, as is well known, they quite explicitly did not make faith depend blindly on this external authority, but rather, *vice versa*, made the authority of the Scriptures dependent on faith. This faith was, indeed, "ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word," [1] and we should heartily agree with this

[1] Westminster *Confession of Faith*, ch. xiv. ii.

insistence on the indispensable function of tradition in awakening the individual's faith; though we should be more careful than the Reformers, and especially their successors, sometimes were, to distinguish the "Word of God" from the mere letter of the Bible taken as a unique, homogeneous, and infallible whole. But even the Reformers were clear that these Scriptures have no authority as the Word of God until faith is awakened in the heart of the individual by the inward witness of the Holy Spirit; so that the ultimate judgment is inward and individual.[1] If we go back beyond the Reformers to the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages, we may seem to have a much purer case of dependence on an external authority—the authority of the Church. Yet perhaps the Scholastic view also, at its best and deepest, leaves room for the element of direct personal conviction at the very heart of faith. Dr. Wicksteed has an important passage in which he shows St. Thomas Aquinas himself, in his analysis of faith, coming in the end to rest upon such an element of inward authority. "And so, after all, at the end of the chapter, the great Catholic theologian joins the Reformers, with their ultimate appeal to the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, and the Quakers with their 'inner light.'" [2]

This is the element of "inspiration" without which (apart from any theory as to its nature—that is what we are going to investigate) there cannot, as Pascal said, be true (Christian) faith at all. Even the highest authorities that we acknowledge in religion can only give us truths which, with their help, we can ultimately see in some measure for ourselves. Thus the ultimate judgment of faith is something deeper than any influence of authority, tradition, or custom. "Oh no, it is not the Scriptures," cried George Fox, the Quaker, when he heard a preacher declaring the Bible to be that "sure Word" whereby they should test all beliefs; "and," he goes on, "I told them what it was,

[1] On Luther in this connexion, see J. H. Leckie, *Authority in Religion*, pp. 37 f.

[2] P. H. Wicksteed, *The Reactions between Dogma and Philosophy illustrated from the Works of S. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 194.

namely, the Holy Spirit, by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures," and whose witness, as he meant, every believer could have in his own heart.[1] This was, of course, a heresy at the time, and yet it was a deep (if one-sided) truth which lay half-concealed at the very heart of orthodoxy, setting a limit to mere outward authority, and teaching the faith of the individual to have an inner argument of its own. This is the inner argument which is implicitly present in the heart of even our simple religious charwoman ; and it cannot be reduced to the influence of authority, custom, and tradition : that explanation breaks down.

II

It seems equally clear, on the other hand, that the inner argument in the heart of the believer cannot be reduced to anything like a logically reasoned proof of the existence of God. That was the other alternative to which we referred at the outset : that faith, where it is anything more valid than belief by mere force of custom, must be based on " reason " in the sense of scientific or philosophical *proof*. Such an argument would require an acute and highly trained mind, and would be quite beyond the grasp of the simple religious soul. Therefore, while it might conceivably explain the faith of the learned divine, it could not explain the faith of his devout charwoman, who may nevertheless have a stronger and deeper faith than he. Some, of course, would tell us that his faith is based on " reason," because he can understand the proofs, while hers is based on authority and custom, because she cannot. Such a distinction is in itself sufficiently odious to anyone who remembers that the mysteries of God's Kingdom are often concealed from the wise and understanding and revealed to babes. But, apart from that, it seems fairly easy to dispose of such a view. We have already shown that mere " custom " and authority are insufficient to explain the faith, not only of the divine, but even of the charwoman.

[1] George Fox's *Journal*, vol. i. ch. iii. (quoted by E. Grubb, *Authority and the Light Within*, p. 37).

And we shall now endeavour to show that "reason," in the sense of logical demonstration, is insufficient to explain the faith, not only of the charwoman, but even of the learned divine.

It has, of course, always been maintained by Catholics, Protestants, Quakers, that the inner argument of the believing soul was something different from "mere reason." When the Schoolmen asserted the authority of the Church, and when the Reformers asserted the authority of the Bible in opposition, they were both heartily agreed in another antithesis: they were both setting up "authority," and really not so much in antithesis to individual "inspiration" as in antithesis to *reason*. And when the Quakers rejected all external authority, whether of Bible or of Church, and exalted the "inner light," it was not only in antithesis to authority, but equally in antithesis to *reason*. Not that reason was in all these cases regarded as an enemy: it might rather be an ally. But it was never regarded by the faithful as qualified to have the chief command in religion, and when it claimed that position it was treated as a menace to faith. Sometimes it was a case of authority *versus* reason, sometimes faith *versus* reason, sometimes revelation *versus* reason, sometimes "the inner light" *versus* reason; and perhaps all these ways of putting it are compatible with each other. But it was always "reason" that was rejected as insufficient in itself to give us the highest truths, at any rate, of religion, and the assurance that they are true.

Now there can be little doubt that this dissatisfaction with "mere reason" has sometimes had the effect of darkening counsel by words without definition. But at the same time there need be no uncertainty as to what kind of argument all these thinkers meant when they spoke of reason. They meant precisely the kind of argument that was being used by philosophy or natural theology to demonstrate the existence of God, the three famous proofs, in one form or another, which have long been known as the ontological, the cosmological, and the teleological (or the argument from design). Now, these are all arguments that take nothing for granted which the veriest sceptic would

not grant; arguments entirely free from any kind of religious assumption or moral postulate; arguments which (as we should say in modern language) abstract entirely from religious experience, and build their conclusions upon nothing more than an impartial observation of natural facts and the principles of the Aristotelean logic. It was such arguments of reason that Schoolmen and Reformers and Quakers were thinking of (for these were the arguments of the philosophy of their day) when they contended that at least the higher truths of religion were inaccessible to reason. No doubt they had, in antithesis to this "reason," further theories of the nature of "revelation" which we might not find acceptable. But at least we can see what the "reason" was which they found so inadequate. To prove a religious truth by reason meant, both for them and for their opponents, to prove it by a compelling logical argument from generally accepted facts of ordinary experience. It meant a kind of argument which would have logical cogency for any mind of sufficient acuteness, quite apart from any conditions of moral or religious preparedness—an argument which did not depend for any of its steps upon a specific and irreducible kind of assurance called "faith."

The greatest of the Schoolmen, and some of their successors too, held that by "reason" in that sense it was possible to prove some of the general truths of religion, such as the existence of God, though they usually held that the higher truths of Christianity could become certain only to "faith." The modern world is doubtless tending to give up that absolute distinction between the general truths of religion and the higher truths of Christianity. But, if so, it is not so much by handing over both to "reason" as by acknowledging that both are dependent on "faith." This may sound surprising, but it is nevertheless true.[1] Theistic

[1] Cf. George Tyrrell's argument that Christianity "is not Theism *plus* certain other beliefs. Theism is but embryonic Christianity; and Christianity is but developed Theism; 'purely natural' religion is mere hypothesis—it is what might have been, but what never was" (*Lex Orandi*, p. xxxi).

philosophy in the modern world admits—nay, proclaims—that without the fundamental venture of faith it cannot make good its argument—cannot prove even the existence of God in any sense worthy of the name. In the Middle Ages philosophy was grounded on "reason" and theology on "faith"; in the rationalistic eighteenth century the attempt was made to ground even theology on "reason"; but in the modern world it is coming to be acknowledged that even philosophy must be grounded on "faith"—or at least any philosophy that gives us God at all. Such philosophy has now learned to admit itself to be based upon an assumption of faith which cannot be reduced to a piece of purely logical demonstration.

In this connexion, of course, every one will think of Kant as the pioneer. He did not, indeed, disparage "reason" (he rather exalted it in antithesis to revelation), since he distinguished it from "understanding"; but he demolished the three traditional arguments for God's existence which "natural reason" had claimed, and established the belief in God as a moral postulate, thus "abolishing knowledge to make room for faith." It may seem a far cry back to Kant when we are speaking of modern tendencies. But the two most distinguished theistic philosophers now living are agreed that Kant's argument here is of fundamental and definitive importance. Professor Pringle-Pattison long ago expressed the view that this was "by far the most important contribution of modern philosophy towards a vital theism"; [1] and Professor A. E. Taylor considers that since Kant developed that argument, nothing "which is new in principle has been added to the arguments for or against theism." [2] It is well known that the theism of Campbell Fraser, so influential in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was frankly and confessedly "a philosophy grounded on faith," [3] absolutely coercive demonstration being impossible. This system is quite

[1] *Two Lectures on Theism* (1897), p. 22.

[2] *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, xii. 281.

[3] Professor Pringle-Pattison quotes this phrase from Campbell Fraser in *Man's Place in the Cosmos*, p. 221.

out of fashion to-day, but if we turn to a highly original and living theistic system like that of James Ward, we find that this also is based, in the end, on faith. It is worked out as an elaborate system of Pampsychism, but this is only a great possibility until at last it comes to be grounded on the "fundamental postulate" of the whole theistic position, that "all things work together for good." This is not, indeed, for Ward an irrational assumption, or anything other than reason in its highest exercise (and here we should entirely agree with him, as will presently be seen); yet it is something different from logical demonstration. It is an assurance for which Ward chooses the word "faith," and without this he would hold that philosophical speculation on the ultimate questions of religious interest can never give us more than "open possibilities." [1]

Professor Pringle-Pattison, who is as much akin to absolute idealism as to the older theism, is equally clear that his whole philosophy rests ultimately upon an unprovable conviction which can be described as "faith." Speaking of the idealistic view in general, he says: "If the critic were to press his objection, I would admit that there is an assumption involved in this philosophical theory, an assumption woven into its very texture, and without which, perhaps, the theory would never have been arrived at—I mean the conviction of the essential greatness of man, and the infinite nature of the values revealed in his life. . . . Every form of philosophical idealism appears to involve this conviction of the profound significance of human life, as capable of appropriating and realizing these values. And without such a conviction, argument about God and the universe would seem to be mere waste of time; for the man to whom his own life is a triviality is not likely to see a meaning in anything else." [2] This distinguished thinker, again, does not, of course, disparage reason: it is a "*reasonable* faith" that he contends for. But he admits that "the belief in ultimate Goodness and Perfection at the heart of things . . . does not present itself to most minds

[1] *The Realm of Ends*, lecture xix. on "Faith and Knowledge."
[2] *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, p. 236.

with the same impersonal logical cogency" as do the conclusions of our ordinary intellectual knowledge; and thus in the last resort it is upon *faith* that his idealistic and theistic philosophy is grounded. There is here undoubtedly an appeal to faith, over the head of reason in the narrower intellectualistic sense. Moreover, this part of his argument is the more significant because he does not profess to be making a new departure, but rather to be interpreting the spirit of modern idealistic philosophy. He points out that Bradley (whom he has very extensively criticized) is in the same case, and that "'we must believe' is Mr. Bradley's way of stating his ultimate conclusion." [1] In a later work Bradley himself says that "philosophy demands, and in a sense rests on, what may fairly be termed faith"; [2] and if in that place he does not mean precisely what we should call religious faith, yet elsewhere in the volume he seems to take the position that whatever religion demands must be true, and thus faith becomes a basis of his philosophical construction.[3] This is surely at the opposite extreme from the view that religious beliefs must be proved by philosophy, or that religious faith can be reduced to logical demonstration. Again, on the question whether the religious consciousness is only to be had through philosophy, we find Bosanquet saying: "The answer to this question seems plain. Philosophy depends on the religious consciousness; the religious consciousness does not depend on philosophy." [4]

William James long ago wrote: "I doubt if dispassionate contemplation of the universe, apart from inner unhappiness and need of deliverance on the one hand and mystical emotion on the other, would ever have resulted in religious philosophies such as we now possess." [5] Long ago, too, James spoke of *faith* as an element "which philosophers as a rule have with great insincerity tried to

[1] *The Idea of God in the Light of Recent Philosophy*, pp. 241 f.
[2] F. H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 15.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 437 ff.
[4] *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, pp. 229 f.
[5] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 431.

huddle out of sight in their pretension to found systems of absolute certainty."[1] But now apparently philosophers (and not only of James's anti-intellectualist school) are admitting their dependence on such an element. We may crown all this by referring to the judgment of Professor Hoernlé in his survey of present-day tendencies. In his judgment, we have now learned that the old arguments for the existence of God "failed precisely because they tried to demonstrate the existence of God without appealing to the evidence of the religious attitude itself." Thus the modern philosophy of religion "does not attempt to prove—if 'proof' is the proper word—the existence of God without an appeal to religious experience."[2] Apparently most modern philosophers who find a place for God in their systems at all, are quite well aware that their theistic or idealistic conclusions are not based on sheer logical demonstration, but in the last resort on some other kind of conviction—an assumption, a demand, a moral postulate, a religious exigency, a somehow-must-be, a fundamental claim of religious experience or the religious consciousness, some kind of argument quite different from the old rationalistic proofs of God's existence—in short (may we not say?), on something which can be called *faith*.

Of course, it cannot be maintained that all schools of philosophy would agree to such a basis, but the very exceptions may be especially instructive as showing how the issues have cleared. The most notable exception is the school of realists which swears by the phrase "scientific method" and has its most distinguished representative in Mr. Bertrand Russell. Mr. Russell goes out of his way to deprecate very explicitly the kind of philosophy which bases its conclusions on anything like mystical intuitions or ethical convictions and demands—we might perhaps say, on faith. But what makes this so significant for our present purpose is his admission that the truly "scientific" philosophy, which leaves all that out, can never give us any light upon the great questions of human interest at all;

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 90.
[2] *Matter, Life, Mind, and God*, pp. 190 f.

along with his contention that the philosophy which in the past has been giving positive answers to these questions, *has* been unconsciously basing itself on those kinds of argument to which we have given the general label of "faith." This reinforces our present argument in a manner which is all the more impressive because of Mr. Russell's radically different point of view. In his view philosophy must limit itself to the standpoint of natural science, with no further data or premises or assumptions or sources of insight: only so can it be regarded as "impartial" and "fully scientific." But he sees clearly that it is not by such a method that philosophy has ever been able to reach any positive theistic or idealistic conclusions, and he gives up all such conclusions as unattainable to the true philosophy of "scientific method."[1] "Extra-scientific philosophy is only the expiring sigh of theology."[2] Mr. Russell here seems to bring against philosophy, as usually practised, the same kind of charge which philosophy itself has sometimes brought against theology—that it is not scientifically impartial. But the kind of impartiality which he desires, the "scientific method" which he advocates, is really identical in principle with the "reason" (in the sense of logical demonstration from the observed facts of the world) which the theism and idealism of to-day are themselves frankly acknowledging to be too narrow a basis. Thus (to waive matters of terminology) we have now found both friends and foes agreeing that such reasoning can never give us any positive religious conclusions. You can never prove the existence of God by the "impartial" kind of logical demonstration which appeals simply to the acute intellect without any moral or religious conditions. The philosophy which tries to do so ends without God at all; the philosophy which leads up to God turns out to be based ultimately upon an assumption of faith. That is how the issues seem to have cleared themselves in the modern world.

[1] See *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 7 ff., 29, 107 ff., 124.

[2] See a review by Mr. Russell of Hobson's *The Domain of Natural Science*, in the *Nation*, 8th September, 1924.

And thus (to return from this excursion into contemporary philosophy) the learned divine is in the same position as his religious charwoman, so far as faith is concerned. His faith in God cannot be based on his philosophy, for his philosophy of God is rather based on his faith. His belief in God cannot be reduced to some kind of " reason " to which the ignorant woman cannot attain, for *that* kind of reason cannot in itself establish any religious truth. There is needed some other kind of argument or conviction at the very basis, and this is what we have been endeavouring to isolate that we may proceed to examine and describe it. Just as mere " custom " could not account for the simple woman's faith, so mere " scientific method " cannot account for the faith of the learned divine. There is in both of them an assurance which requires some further explanation. What is this germ of faith which is the same in the divine and in his charwoman ? On what kind of ground do they, both alike, believe in God and His wisdom and love ? That is our question.

III

Before we pass on, it may be well to repeat what must now have become evident : that our argument does not involve either any denial of the importance of authority and tradition in religion, or any depreciation of reason.

Whatever account we may give of the germ of faith which is the heart of the religious individual, it is quite certain that it is not in a day, or in a lifetime, or within the isolated consciousness of an individual, that this germ ever grows into the system of belief in which alone it can have its full value. A recent writer has remarked that theorists are apt to discuss these subjects as if the real problem were " to discover what kind of religion a man would develop from his own inner experience if he had been entirely cut off from his fellow-men from infancy by being abandoned on a desert island." [1] As a matter of fact, it has taken countless ages for the germ of faith to develop into the rich harvest of beliefs which anyone in the modern world holds as his

[1] R. H. Thouless, *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, p. 16.

own ; and it has required both the continual co-operation of masses of men in religious fellowship, and the indispensable contributions of those great religious spirits who are the spiritual aristocracy of mankind. It has been line upon line, here a little and there a little, in the interplay of one man's religion with another's through countless generations, that the heritage has been built up which comes in one form or another to each of us as our inheritance. And upon that inheritance we are very largely dependent in our faith. Even the deaf-mute who for himself came quite early to the religious conclusion that the moon was alive and was somehow related to his moral life,[1] doubtless owed much more in this matter to the influence of tradition, communicated in various ways by his social environment, than one might at first think. And for most of us the force of authority and the influence of tradition are well-nigh all-important. It is not our task in this book to enter upon a full discussion of the place of authority in religious belief —a subject upon which there are so many good books already.[2] But it has seemed wise to guard ourselves from misunderstanding at the outset by pointing out that the argument leaves ample room for this factor. However true it may be that the religious individual has an inward witness to the things which he believes, it remains equally true (we must freely acknowledge) that our beliefs could never have been worked out by each of us individually, but come to us in a tradition which makes us heirs of all the ages. And though the individual can *appropriate* the tradition by faith (instead of blindly accepting it), and can sometimes even criticize and advance it, yet, on the whole, we are so dependent on the tradition that it comes to us as a kind of *revelation* which our faith goes out to meet with its own inward argument or testimony. Let that acknowledgment of the indispensable function of tradition, which will be repeated incidentally at later points of our argument, be now made deliberately once for all.

On the other hand, we must acknowledge that it can

[1] This was a Mr. D'Estrella. See J. B. Pratt, *op. cit.* pp. 72 f.

[2] By Martineau, Stanton, Dr. J. H. Leckie, etc.

become highly misleading to distinguish either this "revelation," or the faith which goes out to meet it, too sharply from "reason." We have already seen what kind of rational arguments men had in mind when they pronounced reason incapable of giving the highest truths of religion; and having thus made clear in what sense faith must have a different kind of argument, we may as well resolve now to shake ourselves free of that unfortunate terminology. We can see the vital truth in Pascal's famous saying: "The heart has its reasons which the reason does not know"; [1] and it is these reasons of the heart that we have now to investigate. But, after all, they are *reasons*; and if (being also, as we saw, called "inspirations") they can be distinguished from mere cold "impartial" logical demonstrations, yet this saying may remind us by its very element of epigram and paradox that faith's argument does yet belong to *reason* in its highest exercise. None of the modern philosophers whom we quoted as taking their stand on faith would be content to set faith baldly in antithesis to reason. And, of course, it has often been pointed out, as it was by T. H. Green half a century ago, that in the New Testament the meaning of "faith" is never determined by that antithesis, but rather by "the truly scriptural antithesis between Faith and Sight." [2] It is, no doubt, largely a matter of words. Principal Jacks speaks of those apologists who, "instead of raising reason to the full-grown stature of religion, . . . bring religion down to the level of reason while still at the stage of learning the alphabet of its business. To this class of argument," he goes on, "belong Locke's 'proof' of the existence of God, and Paley's of a Beneficent Designer. These argue as though the search for God were like the search for a lost key or for an invisible carpenter." That is the kind of "reason" to which we have refused to let faith be reduced. But it may obviously be highly misleading to use the word "reason" in that sense at all. "Faith," says Principal Jacks, "is neither a substitute for reason

[1] *Pensées* (Brunschvicg), iv. 277.

[2] See Green's famous *Lay Sermon on Faith.*

nor an addition to it. Faith is nothing else than reason grown courageous—reason raised to its highest power, expanded to its widest vision." [1] With this we can entirely agree, and nothing in our argument will be inconsistent with it.[2]

What, then, is this highest exercise of reason, so different from the old "proofs," which gives us the belief in God? That is one way of expressing the question which now opens out before us. Or, to put it in other ways: What is this way of knowing, which is different from ordinary scientific knowledge? What kind of evidence or assurance has it? On what is it based? What is the logic of it? What are the real ultimate grounds of mankind's belief in God, of the Church's belief in God, of the faith and trust of the learned divine or of his devout charwoman? It must be clear to us now that these are all the same question, and that it cannot be fully and finally answered either by words like "authority" and "tradition" or by the word "reason" in the limited sense which we have rejected. There is here something distinctive, and it is the nature and basis of this "faith" that we have now to investigate. What is faith? The present chapter has disposed of some attempts to explain it away, and perhaps also has dropped hints, in advance, of some of the worthier answers to the question which are of importance in the modern world. Some of these answers we shall now examine in the chapters that follow.

[1] L. P. Jacks, *Religious Perplexities*, pp. 16–25.

[2] For an important discussion of the relation of the supra-rational to the rational in religion, see Schleiermacher's *Der Christliche Glaube*, § 13, *Zusatz*.

CHAPTER III

FAITH AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

SYNOPSIS

In this chapter we discuss, as one possible answer to our question, the idea, so characteristic of the present age, that faith is based upon "religious experience." This theory may be found in two main types.

I. *The "theological" type:* "My faith is based upon my religious experience." This is connected with Schleiermacher, though it is not precisely his view. The idea is that (contrary to the older view) the religious experience comes first, and the belief or faith is founded upon it. But there is here a serious confusion. For what *is* the religious experience itself? It is not something which can exist prior to all belief, something *more ultimate than faith* (even Schleiermacher, who regarded religion as pure feeling, would not go that length). It is only *by* faith that we can experience God. Neither the belief nor the experience (neither the *assensus* nor the *fiducia*) can *precede* the other, for they are one and the same thing. Certain forms of the statement that a man's faith is based on his religious experience may indeed contain some important truths loosely expressed; but this whole view is really more confusing than illuminating, and is not the true lesson of the experience-theology.

II. *The "psychological" type:* "My religious belief is based upon an empirical psychological investigation of the religious experience of mankind." It was William James that made the classical attempt in this direction. But the recent developments of psychology make such an argument very precarious; and indeed psychology could hardly admit (nor would religion itself claim) that the existence of a realm of divine realities could be *proved* in such a way. However subtly this kind of argument may be worked out, however impressively one may present the unanimous testimony of the saints of all ages, *this is not faith's own argument*, and it would leave us still at the mercy of psychologists like Jung, who would explain it all away, unless we had some more inward argument for believing.

III. Thus our question as to the basis of faith cannot be answered by the statement that it is based upon religious experience. There are, indeed, at present various signs of a reaction from the free and careless use of this fashionable phrase, most notably in the Barth and Brunner school of theologians in Germany. But the phrase is a highly useful one, which has permanently enriched the theological vocabulary. And it is important for us to have learned that faith *can* be spoken of as an "experience"—that *the faith and the religious experience are essentially the same thing*; though this leaves our fundamental question still unanswered.

CHAPTER III

Faith and Religious Experience

Our question as to the basis of faith is sometimes answered by the statement that faith is based upon "religious experience," and we must devote a chapter to the examination of that answer.

There can be no doubt that this view is connected with one of the typical tendencies of the modern world in religious thought. The phrase "religious experience" has come into vogue in an extraordinary manner during the last generation, and is used almost as a matter of course in many connexions where an earlier generation would have said "religious belief" or "religious life" or simply "religion." When a scholar writes a book on ancient Roman religion, he calls it "The Religious Experience of the Roman People." [1] When a scholar writes a book on Paul's religion, he calls it "The Religious Experience of St. Paul." [2] These titles are sufficient to date the books which bear them as belonging to our generation. It would be difficult to say precisely how old the phrase itself is. As long ago as the eighteenth century apparently it was used in certain evangelical circles, not so much for theological as for practical religious purposes, to denote those intimate matters concerning which "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." [3] But in connexion with

[1] Dr. Warde Fowler's Gifford Lectures. [2] Dr. Percy Gardner.

[3] Sir Leslie Stephen, in his essay on Jonathan Edwards, speaks of a paper by the latter giving "an account of those 'religious experiences' to which his sect attaches so tremendous an importance" (*Hours in a Library*, vol. i. p. 283). Mr. C. C. J. Webb, in a lecture on "Theology as the Science of Religious Experience," after speaking of the modern study of the subject, says: "At an earlier date the expression 'religious experience' would have suggested—perhaps to some it still suggests—

theology the tendency indicated by the phrase is usually traced to the influence of Schleiermacher, whose chief theological work was done in the first quarter of the nineteenth century; and this is quite correct. Yet, in Schleiermacher's own expositions of the nature of religion and the basis of theology, the actual phrase "religious experience" never occurs. The nearest approach to it is where he speaks of "inner experience" as the true source of doctrine.[1] In working out his theology he often refers to "experience" as his basis.[2] But his regular phrase in discussing the fundamentals of his subject is "religious self-consciousness" or "religious consciousness," and the latter of these is precisely the phrase used by his great antagonist Hegel, who is supposed to be the father of a very different theological tendency. It is certainly true that in our time those theologians who stand more or less in the succession of Schleiermacher prefer the phrase "religious experience." Yet they have no monopoly of it: the disciples of Hegel also may be found selecting it for their own use.[3] But probably the book which has done more than any other to make the phrase widely current and popular in our time is William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and James has little in common with either the school of Schleiermacher or that of Hegel. He belongs to an entirely different tradition, derived rather from the English and Scottish Empiricism than from Romanticist German philosophy or theology, and he and his followers are primarily psychologists, approaching religion from the psychological standpoint. Thus it is plain that the phrase

only such feelings and emotions as some Christian communities have deliberately taught their members to watch for in themselves and to describe for the encouragement of their brethren" (*A Century of Anglican Theology*, p. 104).

[1] See *Der Christliche Glaube*, § 30. 2.

[2] The word is *Erfahrung*. See *Der Christliche Glaube*, *passim*. The word *Erlebnis* is also used by German theologians in this connexion. These two words can only be rendered as "experience" in English.

[3] *E.g.* Principal J. B. Baillie, in his book on *The Idealistic Construction of Experience*, having dealt with the various planes of experience in succession, crowns his argument with a treatment of Religion as "Religious Experience."

" religious experience " has become common property in the modern world ; and it surely indicates some relatively new way of regarding religion.

Accordingly, it has occurred to the modern world to ask whether this may not provide the true solution of the old problem as to the basis of religious belief : it is based neither upon authority nor upon reason, but upon religious experience. A German writer has recently pointed out that the whole American psychology of religion, which has so much to say about experience, takes hardly any account of what is called faith ; [1] as if, perhaps, it were a secondary thing, with religious experience as its basis. Can we, then, solve our problem by that reversal of the order ? Can we find any light or leading in the view that religious belief or faith is based upon a more ultimate thing called " religious experience " ? This view is widely held in one form or another in the modern world, and we shall now have to examine it as one possible answer to our general question.

But before we do so, we shall have to discriminate still further. For the above answer seems to be ambiguous. Does it mean that my religious belief, as a religious man, is based on *my* religious experience ; that I believe in God, His love, His mercy, His help, because I have experienced them, and I know, without any further proof ? Or does it mean that my religious beliefs, if any, must be based upon an impartial, empirical, psychological examination of as many of the phenomena of the religious experience of mankind as I can collect, and must be confined to whatever can be proved from those phenomena by the ordinary laws of psychological explanation ? These are two fairly distinct types of view. And in this place we have to do with both of them, for both are widely held in a variety of forms. Both belong to the general class of theories which base religious belief on religious experience, but the former might be called the *theological* type and the latter the *psychological* type. We saw above that the prevalence of the phrase " religious experience " was partly among theologians and partly among psychologists. No hard-and-fast line,

[1] Emil Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis und Glaube*, 2nd and 3rd eds., p. 38.

of course, can be drawn, for there are all sorts of cross-currents; but it does seem necessary to make a distinction on the lines indicated by these epithets. We shall now proceed to examine, first the "theological," and then the "psychological," way of holding that religious experience is the true basis of religious belief.

I

We have called the first type the theological because, on the whole, it is rather more characteristic of theological circles. We can best lead up to an appreciation of this theory by asking: Which comes first in religion—the belief or the experience? Which is logically and psychologically prior? Which is based on the other? Is it a case of first believing the truth of religion, and then, with that necessary foundation laid, building up thereon the actual experience of the religious life? Or is it a case of religious experience first as the foundation of the whole structure of belief?

It will immediately occur to the mind of the reader that the former is the old view and the latter the newer view. It would, indeed, be very risky to say that the former was ever precisely the position of traditional Christian thought at its best, whether in the Middle Ages or among the Reformers. But it will certainly be recognized as a view which has had great influence in the theology of the past. Belief was grounded directly upon the authority of the Church or of the Bible, and then as a further step came the actual practice and experience of religion. Of course we cannot expect to find the older theology definitely stating and accepting that view in conscious antithesis to what we have called the newer view, for the latter had not then been clearly conceived at all, and, as we saw, the very phrase "religious experience" is a distinctively modern one. But it is not impossible to find in the older theology fairly clear expressions of the underlying idea that the belief comes first and the experience afterwards. One example may be found in Anselm's dictum: *Qui non crediderit, non*

experietur, "He who has not believed will not have the experience."[1] Another may be found in the traditional breaking-up of faith into three stages, which were called *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*. This distinction used to be an accepted one in Protestant theology, and goes back into the Middle Ages, and perhaps further still.[2] First of all, according to this theory, comes *notitia*, a knowledge of the revealed truths of religion, as taught by Scripture and Church. Then comes *assensus*, the intellectual assent to, or acceptance of, these truths, as vouched for by authority, or, in other words, *belief* in the truths. And then, after these requisite preliminary steps, came *fiducia*, the personal trust, or saving faith, which is the actual experience of religion. In the older Protestant theology these three were sometimes definitely distinguished, not only as logical stages or elements, but as successive temporal stages which could only come in that order.[3] But that is precisely a case of "first belief, then experience," in other words. Our third example is a still clearer one, and amounts to a kind of prophetic rejection, in so many words, of the modern idea that in religion the experience comes before the belief. It is found in the old Lutheran theologian, Gottfried Arnold (1666–1714), whose position is described by Höffding as follows: "The whole significance of experience, in his eyes, lies in the fact that it affords a field for the practice of the doctrines of Scripture. Experience, then, is not a ground but a consequence and fruit, and must be judged 'according to the Word of God.' With the clearness which distinguishes him, Arnold then goes on to draw from this the conclusion that experience must occupy a different place in religion from that which it holds in science; in religion it

[1] Quoted in article "Scholasticism," *E.R.E.*, xi. 243.

[2] See Luthardt, *Kompendium der Dogmatik*, § 63, 2; J. Köstlin, *Der Glaube und seine Bedeutung für Erkenntnis, Leben und Kirche*, p. 78.

[3] For this I am indebted to W. Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, 3rd English ed., pp. 217 ff. Herrmann, who criticizes this whole view in an illuminating way, gives it as the orthodox Lutheran view; and for the emphasis on the temporal succession of these three stages he refers especially to a Lutheran theologian Quenstedt (lived 1617–88).

follows after belief, in science it precedes it." [1] This is all the more interesting since Arnold was less of a traditionalist and more of a mystic than his more orthodox fellow-Lutherans, and had a good deal of kinship with the Pietism which emphasized inner experiences. The very name of the book in which these views are worked out is *Theologia Experimentalis*. Alongside of these three illustrations from the past we may put the following statement by a learned Roman Catholic of our own day—it is as plain a statement as we could desire of what we have called the older view: "We believe in the method of faith, relying on external authority. It is the only means of bringing men to the same truth. *Religious experience follows*." [2]

These are sufficient illustrations of the view "first belief, then experience," which was common in the older orthodoxy. But it is important to note that it is essentially the same view which is found in the opposing "rationalism" of the eighteenth century—with this simple difference, that the rationalists in their revolt would base the belief which precedes experience not on the authority of Church or Bible but on "natural" or "rational" grounds. Indeed, those men of the Enlightenment would more than ever hold that the first thing in religion is to establish your *beliefs* (which, however, they would proceed to do, not by appeal to revelation, but by rational proof), and then you can put your religion into practice. They would, perhaps, have been the last people in the world to think of using a phrase like "religious experience" at all. But their view was essentially that in religion belief comes before experience, and so far they are at one with the orthodoxy from which they revolted.

Now it was in antithesis to this whole order of things that the experience-theology appeared as something new,

[1] Höffding, *Philosophy of Religion*, English translation, p. 103. I have not been able to see Arnold's own book.

[2] From a statement made by Father Francis Woodlock, S.J., to the Conference of Modern Churchmen at Oxford in August 1925. See vol. xv. of *The Modern Churchman*, p. 266. (Our italics.)

making "religious experience" primary and prior to all explicit beliefs. It is with the name of Schleiermacher, as has been said, that the rise of this tendency is usually connected. Wernle speaks of "the experience-theology, which was brilliantly initiated by Schleiermacher." [1] Every student knows how this great theologian described religion as essentially a matter, not of knowledge, but of feeling, and more particularly as the feeling of absolute dependence on God. But what concerns us especially at this point is his insistence that this feeling of dependence on God was the very *fons et origo* of the idea of God, and was not by any means based on an idea of God already obtained by the mind in some other way. "Our proposition," he says, "is intended to oppose the view that this feeling of dependence is itself conditional upon some *previous* knowledge regarding God." [2] Again he speaks unsympathetically of "those who rejoice in the possession of an original idea of the Supreme Being, *derived from some other source*, but have no *experience of religion*." [3] It is plain that we have here something new, and consciously realized as new: the view that religious experience is not based upon a belief in God previously accepted by us on some other grounds, but is itself the source of the very idea of God. In these passages Schleiermacher is doubtless thinking primarily of his opponents, the "rationalists"; and whatever we think of his general view of religion, there can be no question that this argument against "rationalism" laid the foundation for that profound lesson which modern thought has undoubtedly learned, though often without any realization of debt to Schleiermacher—no longer to attempt to prove religious truths from non-religious premises.[4] But Schleiermacher's position in this matter is not only a revolt against rationalism. It is a revolt against that whole older way of thinking, in which orthodoxy with its authorities, as well as rationalism with its proofs, was involved—the view that belief comes first and

[1] Wernle, *Einführung in das theologische Studium*, 2nd ed., p. 297.
[2] Schleiermacher, *Der Christliche Glaube*, § 4, 4. (Our own italics.)
Ibid. § 5, *Zusatz*. (Our own italics.)
[4] See p. 72, *supra*.

religious experience follows. According to Schleiermacher, the experience is the primary thing.

Now Schleiermacher himself will never be found saying that religious belief or faith is *based upon* the experience. He was too conscious of the primacy of faith to allow himself to make it thus definitely secondary; and, indeed, he set upon the title-page of his greatest work that dictum of Anselm's which we quoted as illustrating the older standpoint (*Qui non credideriť, non experietur*), though it seems in some ways curiously out of place there. But as the experience-theology grew, owing partly to his influence and partly to more recent influences, there developed an idea which is now pretty widespread—that this gives us the true basis of faith, the ground upon which we believe the truths of religion: we believe them because we have experienced them. Religious experience is spoken of as analogous to other departments of our experience which are the source of our various kinds of knowledge. Just as our knowledge of the external world, or our belief in its existence, is based upon our sense-experience, so our religious belief is based upon our religious experience. This idea is constantly occurring in the modern literature of religion. Professor Pratt tells us that of those who answered his questionnaire as to the grounds of their belief, 37 per cent. insisted "that their belief in God was based not on authority, argument, or wish, but upon some form of feeling or 'inner experience.'" [1] Bishop Temple says: "The first evidence to the religious man of the existence of God is his own religious experience." [2] A philosopher writes: "Religious faith must be built upon an experience not wholly different from sensation; but a supersensible experience, like our experience of our human fellows. . . ." [3] Another says still more explicitly: ". . . every religious experience—I am making a distinction between religious experience and religious faith—leads to religious faith and belief." [4] Another

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 216.
[2] W. Temple, *The Faith and Modern Thought*, p. 4.
[3] W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 155.
[4] Professor E. G. Spaulding in an essay on "The Psychology of

begins a sentence: "Even if the main ground of our belief in the existence of God is our religious experience, and our instinct educated in that experience. . . ."[1] These isolated citations cannot pretend to do justice to the thought of their writers, but they serve to illustrate the widespread idea that in religion the experience comes first, and that the belief is founded upon it.

Is that, then, a satisfying answer to our question as to the ultimate basis of our faith—that it is based upon our religious experience? Does that solve the problem?

Our first thought will be that we are here on the right road. But our second thought, or, at least, our later deliberate thought, dawning uneasily upon us, will surely be that there is here some hopeless confusion. My faith based upon my religious experience? But then what *is* my religious experience itself? And how does it come? On the above view it must apparently be something *prior* to all religious belief, since it is the basis of such belief. But how can there be any religious experience, how can there be any religion, until there is some element of belief? "He that cometh to God must believe that he is." That is fundamental. How can I have experience of religion, or of the objects of religion, except *through* belief, through faith? Surely all the possible religious experiences which a man may have are in some sense bound up with a believing attitude of his mind. It is by faith that they come—so the saints themselves tell us. When a religious man in some hour of sorrow or anxiety or penitence experiences God's comfort, God's peace, or God's forgiveness, that means that in the deepest sense he *believes* in God's love or care or mercy, and rests upon them by faith. Or does some one object that he does not believe in these things, but experiences them? Well, he certainly experiences them. But how can he do that except by believing in them? "After all," says Boutroux, "that which saves us is not a God

Religion," in an American symposium, *Christianity and Modern Thought* (Yale University Press, 1924), p. 69.

[1] Will Spens, *Belief and Practice*, p. 61.

separated from our belief, but our belief in God." [1] This is simply what the whole tradition of Christian theology has firmly insisted upon—that we can never find or touch or experience God except by faith. Such faith may, indeed, be largely independent of expressed dogmas; it may not be very conscious of itself; it may not be able to state what it believes. But surely it must always have the element of belief inherent in it. It must always be fundamentally a matter of *believing*. And it is only through this believing that one can have any experience of the objects of religion. Thus it cannot be correct to say: first religious experience, and then the belief founded thereon.

Does this mean, then, that we are driven back to what we have called the older view—that belief comes first, founded on something else, and then experience as an application or fruit? No; we surely must not be driven to that. For the question would then immediately arise again: What *is* the belief based on, since it is prior to all actual religious experience? And we should then apparently be driven to one of the more external ways of grounding our faith, basing it either on a purely outward *authority* or on a purely rationalistic *proof*—both of which ways we have already found to be unworthy.[2] We must not be driven in that direction if we can find any help for it. But now we seem to be left in an awkward position. For we seem now to have rejected the view that the experience is based on the belief, and also the view that the belief is based on the experience. That is, indeed, precisely what we have done. But there is nothing awkward about it. For we are left with the only view which is actually true to the religious life—namely, that the belief and the experience *are one*. They are one and the same thing. To speak of them separately, to make one of them prior to the other, is to deal in abstractions, and to forget, in the unreality of theological jargon, what every Christian child knows—that *religion is faith*. Religion, of course, includes also the

[1] É. Boutroux, *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*, English translation, p. 337.

[2] See Chapter II., *supra*.

emotions connected with faith, and the cultus which it inspires and on which it nourishes itself, and even the moral life which it promotes. These are, indeed, all in a sense part of "religious experience." But in its inner principle, as an experience of objective divine reality, religious experience simply *is faith*. And this is precisely what has been forgotten by many who have spoken of faith as based on religious experience. They have used that phrase without asking themselves what it stands for, and without realizing the implications of their own words.[1]

The truth is that we have no logical right to speak of the experience as prior to the belief unless we are prepared to accept the view that religious experience itself is purely a matter of *feeling* without any cognitive element whatever; and though this was Schleiermacher's own deliberate view, it is by no means avowed or intended by all who in the modern world speak so lightly of the experience coming first and the belief following. But if we did accept that view of religious experience as pure feeling, it would only land us in fresh difficulties when we came to speak of the basing of our beliefs. For, if they are not implicit in the experience, how can they be got out of it? This difficulty is plain in Schleiermacher himself. He speaks as if all religious beliefs, or at least all doctrines, were got by *reflection upon* our religious experiences. They are "utterances concerning religious states of mind." But that is an absurd description. Religious doctrines are not primarily about states of the human mind, but about objective divine realities, God and His ways and His works. Schleiermacher knew that well, and in the actual working out of his system of theology he is better than his theory.[2] But then a still

[1] Cf. V. Solovyof: "The reality of the Deity is not a deduction from religious experience, but the *content* of it—*that which is experienced*. If this immediate reality of the higher principle be taken away, there would be nothing left of religious experience" (*The Justification of the Good*, N. A. Duddington's translation, p. 164).

[2] Cf. Kaftan: "Schleiermacher himself was therefore unable to adhere consistently to his standpoint in his system of doctrine: he had to reckon with the fact that faith is a knowledge of objective realities" (*Dogmatik*, p. 27).

greater difficulty remains for Schleiermacher. If these doctrines are the actual truths of faith, have they, as beliefs, no place *in religion itself*? And—to come to the crucial question—if the beliefs have no place in the actual experience of religion itself, has *faith* no place in religion itself? Is it also a secondary matter, based on the more ultimate thing which is religion itself? That would really be the logical conclusion of this way of thinking: faith would be based upon religious experience, but, of course, the religious experience is the important thing—it is religion; and what, then, does faith matter, coming in afterwards as it does, if you have the religious experience already? That would be the *reductio ad absurdum*, if we are to have any regard for the testimony of the saints as to what matters in religion. Schleiermacher was, of course, far too conscious of the centrality of faith to take any such turning in his argument, though it might seem to be logically involved. To him the feeling of absolute dependence *was* faith, and the very title-page of his *magnum opus* on "The Christian Faith" is enough to show us how large a place he meant to give to the idea of faith in his theology. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that it does not fit easily and naturally into his system, since he regarded the religious man's relation to God as different from what is naturally denoted by "faith." He has a long section on faith in Christ, and in the course of it he speaks incidentally of faith in God, referring the reader back to an earlier passage in the book—a passage which never actually mentions faith, but treats in a general way of the feeling of absolute dependence upon God, which is for Schleiermacher the essence of religion.[1] He identifies it with faith (and thus for him, as for us, the faith and the religious experience are one and the same thing); but surely faith is not a good name for a state of feeling pure and simple, without any cognitive element even implicit in it. Schleiermacher's theology is better than his theory, but if his theory were consistently followed out, religion, as a state of pure

[1] See *Der Christliche Glaube*, § 14, 1, and then § 4, 4. In § 108, 1 and 2, faith is also treated of in connexion with Conversion.

feeling, would not be faith at all, in any natural sense of the word.

And the same thing is still more manifestly true of the idea that faith is *based on* religious experience: its effect virtually is to dethrone faith from its central place in the life of religion, in favour of that more ultimate thing. Perhaps, indeed, it is only necessary to point out this startling consequence. For it is not intentionally that people move in this direction, but largely, as we have seen, through a loose use of the phrase. Really, as one writer says with great good sense, "a man's religious experience is his *total* experience of life in so far as he is swayed by genuine belief in God."[1] It is the faith-attitude to life. If this inseparability of the belief and the experience were kept clearly in mind, a great deal of confusion on the whole subject would be avoided.[2]

It is, of course, notorious that the word "experience" has been a fruitful source of confusion in philosophical thought for centuries, and it seems now to have brought similar confusion into theological thought. In fact, the controversy as to whether religious belief can be based on religious experience seems to be a repetition in another realm of the old philosophical controversy, "Is all our knowledge derived from experience?" The error of the old empiricists who answered that question with a round affirmative lay in their having a falsely abstract conception of experience. They treated experience in general (and it was, of course, sense-experience that they were concerned with) as something purely given, to which the mind contributed nothing, but which was furnished ready-made to the *tabula rasa* of the mind. What they had to learn was that there is no such thing as a purely given experience. That is an abstraction. Of course it is true, as they con-

[1] H. Balmforth, *Is Christian Experience an Illusion?* p. 9.

[2] A clarifying discussion of the meaning of the phrase "religious experience" is given in the opening chapter of the volume on *Religious Experience* by Dr. Kenneth Edward, my predecessor in the Kerr Lectureship. Unfortunately that useful book had not been published until after the present chapter had been written, and I have only been able to make use of it in revisal.

tended, that there is no knowledge *prior* to experience: in that sense they were right as against the doctrine of innate ideas. Of course it is true in that sense that all our knowledge comes from experience. Only, it would be much more accurate to say, *through* experience, or *in* experience—that is what we have now learned. For the experience is not a mere datum. The experience itself involves a cognitive element, an element of judgment. Every perception is a judgment, and without that there is no experience at all. Thus the question whether all our knowledge is derived from experience is seen to depend, at least partially, on a confusion. In one sense the statement is absurd; in another sense it is almost a truism, which would be accepted by all schools, since we have nothing but experience to go upon at all. All this is familiar to students of philosophy. But now surely a similar confusion has entered into the question whether *religious* knowledge or belief is derived from religious experience, and it has to be unravelled in much the same way. Certainly there could be no religious knowledge apart from religious experience altogether. That is true as against every theory of a purely external authority, and as against theological "rationalism." That is the real lesson which the theological world has learned from Schleiermacher; and though the debt to him may not always be acknowledged or realized, yet that insight has come to dominate all the best thinking upon religious questions in the modern world. Here is what a modern philosopher says in giving a sketch of contemporary tendencies in philosophy (and it is extraordinarily like the sentences we quoted from Schleiermacher above, though the debt seems quite unconscious): "We know God through religion, and there is no other way of knowing him. It is not that we are religious because we have become convinced antecedently, from other sources, that there is a God." [1] That is how modern thought upon these questions has transcended the idea of "first belief, then religious experience" (just as modern philosophical thought has transcended the doctrine of innate ideas as preceding

[1] R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, *Matter, Life, Mind, and God*, p. 192.

actual sense-experience). But then it would be equally false to say that in religion the experience comes first, before the belief. "We know God *through* religion"—that is the true account. The knowledge or belief and the religious experience are one and the same thing. There is no such thing as a religious experience which is simply given, a ready-made thing prior to any element of belief. Such an idea is unthinkable, and would be precisely a repetition in the religious realm of the old philosophical confusion. But, indeed, whatever we think upon the general philosophical question, it is independently quite clear that the religious experience must not be conceived in that mechanical way. That is the way of superstition, not the way of faith. The contact of the soul with God must not be conceived in a quasi-physical manner, as if it were one body being touched by another. Mystics have indeed sometimes tended, as Baron von Hügel critically points out, "to speak of such a purely spiritual effect as Grace, and such purely spiritual beings as the Soul and God, as though they were literally sensible objects sensibly impressing themselves upon the Mystic's purely passive senses." [1] But it is by believing and trusting in God that we come into touch with Him. Luther put it in his quaint but penetrating way: "To have God, you will be at no loss to judge that you are unable to seize Him or grasp Him with your hands, or to enclose Him in a purse, or to secure Him in a chest. But this is apprehending Him, when the heart embraces Him and cleaves to Him." [2] Thus religious experience is not a thing which comes of itself apart from faith or before faith. It *is* faith. To believe *is* religion.

There does seem, of course, to be a kind of believing which is not religion—that objection will occur to everybody. "The devils believe and tremble"; and so it may be said that "intellectual assent" to the truths of religion does not make a man religious. With the intention of this last statement we shall all heartily agree, though we may

[1] *The Mystical Element of Religion*, vol. ii. p. 286.

[2] *Major Catechism*, Weimar ed. of *Werke*, Band 30, 133.

not regard its wording as unexceptionable. But what, then, is the difference between this assent and the real judgment of faith? It can hardly be that real faith *adds* something on to the assent which is already there: that would involve a return to one of the errors which we have already rejected. The true answer surely is that there is an important difference between what a man thinks he believes (perhaps merely because he has been brought up to it, or because others believe it) and what he really believes; and that when a man without any living experience of religion assents "intellectually," as he thinks, to the truths of religion, it is not really the truths of religion that he has assented to, but certain metaphysical or quasi-metaphysical statements. The truths of religion are really of such a nature that they can be apprehended only in the personal experience of religion, *i.e.* in personal religious faith. They can only be *symbolized* by dogmas, however excellent, and it is in fact impossible to find dogmas which can express the realities of religion without contradiction. The doctrines, however much they are purged and perfected, can only hint at the religious truths which lie beyond, and it is only the religious man who can understand what they, with their "broken lights," symbolize. This is a well-recognized fact of religion, to which we shall later have occasion to refer at greater length. Thus a man who merely accepts the doctrines "intellectually" does not really know what they mean, any more than a colour-blind man knows what "red" and "green" mean when he believes, as he may quite naturally do, on the strength of another man's statements, that a certain book is red and another one green. His "intellectual assent" is quite a different thing from the perceptual judgment of the man who sees. We need not stop to discuss whether any man is so absolutely colour-blind to religion as that. But if he were, he could not accurately be said to believe the truths of religion even "intellectually," for he could not understand them at all. Thus there is really no such thing as an "intellectual assent" to religious truth, separable from the actual religious experience itself. It is only in the religious experience that

you see what the thing means at all. The belief and the experience are one.

In our introductory chapter we saw that the New Testament in its idea of faith combined intellectual belief and practical trust, and never made the slightest separation. It would seem that many of the confusions which have since arisen in this matter could never have arisen if that lesson had been remembered. But when theologians began to distinguish *assensus* and *fiducia* as two separate elements, or even two successive stages, confusion was bound to arise. For we have now seen that it is equally false to put *assensus* before *fiducia* and to put *fiducia* before *assensus*. Really, they are inseparable—they are one. Indeed, we might in a sense go further, and say that *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia* are all one, since you cannot even know the truths of religion, much less assent to them, except in the actual experience which is religious faith or trust. It is, of course, necessary for these truths to be *presented* to the individual, and that is where authority and tradition come in. And yet, though the individual begins with a knowledge of the doctrines, as presented to him by the Church, that preliminary knowledge does not really become a knowledge of religious truth at all until the man begins by faith to enter into the experience of religion. In that sense it is all *fiducia*. And it is very interesting to remember that this was really the view of the Reformation theology at its best. Luther has sometimes been criticized for equating faith simply with *fiducia*, trust, as if there were nothing else in it, no intellectual element. But surely this is the meaning he was aiming at—that it is only when you actually *trust* that you have any real apprehension of the truths of religion. Only in this *fiducia*, this saving faith, this trust, this actual experience of religion, can you even understand what the very word "God" means.[1] That comes out plainly in Luther's famous passage in the *Major Catechism*. "What does it mean to have a God? Or what is God?

[1] I am aware that passages might be quoted to show that Luther meant the very opposite—that the mere intellectual belief in God is common property, and has nothing to do with faith at all.

Answer : A God is that whereat a man can provide himself with all good and find refuge in every need. Thus to have a God is nothing else but to trust and believe Him from the heart. As I have often said, it is solely the trusting and believing of the heart that makes both a true God and a false. If the faith and trust are right, then thy God is also right ; and again, where the trust is false and wrong, the right God is not there. For the two belong together, faith and God." [1] It must always be false to separate the *assensus* and the *fiducia*, or the belief and the experience, and to put either before the other. These two are one and inseparable.

Of all the schools of theology, perhaps the one which has learned this whole lesson most thoroughly is the Ritschlian. From the tradition of Schleiermacher they learned the great lesson never to attempt to base religious belief on anything outside of the religious experience itself. But they learned a great deal from Luther too, and their enthusiasm for Luther and the Reformers in general saved them from ever forgetting the centrality of faith. Thus they did much more justice to faith than Schleiermacher did, and avoided the chief errors and confusions which have beset the experience-theology. Both Ritschl himself and his great disciple Herrmann have illuminating criticisms of the distinction between *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*.[2] And the following passage by another theologian of kindred tendencies sums up the whole matter in a way which is extraordinarily like the conclusion we have reached in the foregoing pages. " This religious knowledge is inseparable from personal saving trust : it is only together with the latter that it has its origin and its being. There-

[1] On the First Commandment, in the *Major Catechism*, see Weimar edition of the *Werke*, Band 30, 132 f. In the *Commentary on Galatians*, ch. i., Luther speaks of faith as " *certa fiducia cordis et firmus assensus quo Christus apprehenditur.*" Thus he here brings in *assensus*, yet not as a prior stage to *fiducia*, but as simply identical with it.

[2] Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation*, English translation (of the third German volume), pp. 100 ff., 140 ff. Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, English translation, pp. 216 ff. (To Herrmann I am especially indebted in what I have written.)

fore the description, current in Protestant Dogmatics, of faith as *notitia, assensus, fiducia,* should be understood in the sense that on the foundation of the historical report of God's redeeming revelation (*notitia*) there arise, simultaneously and inseparably, the *trust in its redeeming power* (*fiducia*) and the *conviction of its truth* (*assensus*)." [1] It is plain how this view, while retaining all the true lessons of the experience-theology, avoids the hopeless confusion of the idea that our religious belief or faith is *based on our religious experience.*

Before we pass on from this theological type of theory to what we have called the psychological type, we may note that the view we have been considering sometimes takes a popular form which may still, after all our argument, seem to be left standing. A religious man sometimes looks back to a great " experience " which he had at one moment of his life, and says that his faith is grounded on that. Many things may change, and certainly his moods may change, but through all changes he looks back to that great experience of God's grace in his soul at his conversion ; and all he believes about God and Christ is founded ultimately on that experience, which he cannot doubt was wrought by God in Christ. As a matter of fact, this form of the theory, though we have called it a popular form, has had its turn in theological circles too, in the Erlangen School of last century ; and especially in its greatest representative, F. H. R. Frank, whose distinctive view was that, out of the fundamental experience of regeneration or conversion, there arise for the Christian both the certainty of faith and all the variety of religious beliefs contained in the creeds.[2] But instead of lingering over this dead theological system, let us ask whether we have any controversy with the simple Christian who looks back to the great experience of his conversion and tells us that all his belief in God and in Christ, all his certainty, all his faith, is founded on that indubitable fact. This would seem to be a normal and

[1] Otto Kirn, *Grundriss der evangelischen Dogmatik,* 5th ed., p. 24.

[2] See Frank, *System of the Christian Certainty,* English translation, especially pp. 108 ff. (§§ 15–17).

healthy, if not a universal, case of a man's faith being based upon his religious experience.

But is that really a quite correct description of the case we are imagining? Surely not. Surely it is the result of a wrong analysis. A religious man may very naturally look back for inspiration, amid the dust of life, to a great religious moment in his past. But it is not in order that he may build his faith on a past experience of God or of religion. The main thing is that he should experience God, and have a living religion, here and now in the present; and if he has not that, what is the advantage of having a kind of second-hand certainty based on an experience in the past? It would be a poor thing to have the *experience* of God in one's past, but only the *belief* in God in one's present. But the whole mistake again obviously is that of separating the experience and the belief. The great experience to which a man looks back was a faith-experience. And the really sound reason for which he often looks back to it is not that he may build an inferential belief on it, but that he may, as it were, get it back again, get into its atmosphere again, rise again to the point of faith which he then reached, and see the realities of religion as he then saw them. He ought to be seeing them all his life, as a result of the great initiation, and that whole story is the story of his religious experience. He cannot always be equally conscious of them, and sometimes they are sure to become dim and unreal to him. And then he may go back to his early experience, not that he may base his faith upon it (which would be a very unevangelical idea indeed), but because the very memory of it may set divine realities before his eyes again, may awaken his faith, and so lead him again to the experience of God. That is to say, at times when faith tends to be dull, a man may quicken it by going back in memory to moments when faith burned brightly. Or the memory of a great moment of religious experience in the past may quicken our religious experience in the present. But it is not a matter of present faith resting for its evidence on a past experience.

There is, of course, another sense in which a man might

say that his faith in God " rests on the experience of a lifetime." But even that is not a quite accurate expression. What he really means is that in the experience of life, as the years went by, his faith has grown clearer and surer, and he now has all that accumulated clearness and sureness. In the life of faith he has gone through all sorts of situations, and with the eye of faith he has seen divine realities from many different angles ; and as a result of all that religious experience he knows his way about better in the realm of divine things, he has a clearer faith, he has a more constant and less chaotic religious experience than he used to have. But his faith is not based upon a past experience to which he looks back ; his faith *is* a present experience of the realities of religion ; and it will even be his wisdom to " forget the things which are behind " and press on to a still deeper religious experience and a still richer faith—which are, indeed, one and the same thing.

Thus it is always less illuminating than confusing, to say that a man's faith is based upon his religious experience.

II

But we have now to turn to what we distinguished as the " psychological " way of basing belief upon religious experience. Let us be quite clear about the difference between this and what we called the more " theological " way. We have been seeing how a good deal of present-day theological thinking might be expressed in the sentence : " I believe the truths of religion because I have experienced them." Now it is obvious that, even if a clear meaning could be put into that sentence, it would be valid only for the individual experient. But now the further question arises whether it is possible, from an impartial psychological investigation of as many phenomena of other people's religious experience as we can collect, to draw a sufficiently sure conclusion about the existence of a Divine Being to be the basis of one's own religious belief. The classical attempt in this direction is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience.* James did not believe that the

truths of religion could be proved in an *a priori* manner, " out of the resources of logical reason alone, or of logical reason drawing rigorous inference from non-subjective facts." One of the aims of his book was to discredit such " intellectualism in religion." But then the positive aim of his book was to try another way of establishing some religious belief—namely, by a psychological consideration of the phenomena of the religious life. His book is " a laborious attempt to extract from the privacies of religious experience some general facts which can be defined in formulas upon which everybody may agree." [1] This was meant to be a purely empirical procedure, without any assumptions. A theologian of the line of Schleiermacher said : " I myself as a Christian am the primary subject-matter of myself as a theologian," [2] and such a theologian would not attempt to prove anything to the outsider, but would speak only to those who had the experience themselves, assuming that the experience is its own authority. But James means something quite different. He assumes nothing. The mystical experience, he admits, has authority for the person who experiences it ; but James's argument is for everybody ; and so he must take the mystical experience and all other religious experiences simply as data for a psychological investigation from a purely empirical point of view, and ask whether anything can reasonably be inferred from them as to the existence of a realm of divine realities. If I cannot base my belief upon my own religious experience, can I base it upon the religious experience of people in general ? Do the phenomena which can thus be gathered call for any theological hypothesis to explain them ? That is the question for the psychologist who thus wishes to turn theologian.

To this question James gives an affirmative answer. " I am so much impressed," he writes, " by the importance of these phenomena that I adopt the hypothesis which they so naturally suggest " ; and he means the hypothesis

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 433.

[2] It was Hofmann who said this. It is quoted by Kattenbusch, *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl.*

of some transmundane reality which may be called God, breaking at various points into our lives, partly or mainly through our subliminal consciousness. James actually seems to mean that at certain points the purely psychological explanation of the phenomena of religious experience breaks down, or, at least, leaves gaps. "At these places at least, I say, it would seem as though transmundane energies, God, if you will, produced immediate effects within the natural world to which the rest of our experience belongs." [1] James would not contend that anything very definite can be actually *proved* in this way, but he holds that it is made sufficiently probable to give us the working belief which we need. "What the more characteristically divine facts are, apart from the actual inflow of energy in the faith state and the prayer state, I know not. But the overbelief on which I am ready to make my personal venture is that they exist." It is important to notice that James does not claim anything like absolute demonstration of religious truth from the psychological facts, and that he has to help out his faith with a further doctrine of the "will to believe." This doctrine, which James had already developed elsewhere, we shall consider in another chapter, for it is really a different theory of faith altogether. But meanwhile our question is whether we can have any good hope of establishing the truths of religion on a basis of psychology, as providing the only explanation of the psychological facts of religious experience. Is that really, for the modern world, as many would contend, the one sound method of basing religious belief?

It will occur to every one who knows anything about the recent developments of psychology, that such an argument is now much more difficult to maintain than it was when James's book was written. The part played in psychology by the idea of the subconscious, which James was one of the first to employ largely, has increased very greatly since his time, but not in such a way as to leave much room for supernaturalistic explanations. The tendency of psychology nowadays is to explain whatever comes from

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 524.

the subconscious or unconscious region by means of the past history of the person and the fundamental " instincts " of the mind. And whether or not we think the conception of the " unconscious " a useful one in psychology, we cannot but admit that a great deal can be done nowadays to give purely psychological or psychophysical explanations of mental experiences which in an earlier day might have seemed mysterious enough to demand the hypothesis of direct supernatural influence.[1] Thus there are few psychologists who would admit the possibility of an empirical proof of the existence of divine realities from the phenomena of religious experience. It will, indeed, be maintained that, if psychology is an empirical science at all, it cannot be con tent so long as there are any gaps left in its purely empirical explanation. And many of the gaps which to a former generation would have suggested a supernatural explanation are now being bridged by a reference to the unconscious and by means of such ideas as auto-suggestion. If a sense of the presence of God, of illumination, deliverance, divine succour, can be explained by auto-suggestion,

[1] We are apt, however, to imagine that the tendency to give " psychological or psychophysical explanations " of religious experience, and so appear to explain it away, is much newer than it really is. It is interesting to find Venn, the famous logician, in the Hulsean Lectures for 1869, writing as follows : " There is of course hardly any difference of opinion as to the general existence of religious sentiments ; the only question is, what are we to make of them ? . . . The psychologist as such (I refer to the analytical school of Psychology) does not much trouble himself about the objective facts, but undertakes to explain how the sentiments arise, namely either from our bodily organization or by some law of mental association. Thus in Mr. Bain's work a section will be found headed 'the religious sentiment,' just as others may be headed 'wonder' and 'awe,' and so on. Such an explanation is certainly not incompatible with belief in the truth of the facts of religion, but it seems equally certain that its tendency is to make these facts needless, and so to prepare the way for a denial of them." At a later point Venn speaks of the attempt to explain away such facts as the sick-bed conversion of atheists, by the " doctrine of latent consciousness," which is but an old name for what modern psychology calls the subconscious or the unconscious. See Venn, *Some Characteristics of Belief*, p. 24 (footnote) and p. 99 (footnote). It is sometimes said that the threat to religion from natural science has now given way to the threat from psychology. But the threat from psychology was present in the very midst of the controversy aroused by the Darwinian theory in the realm of natural science.

then these experiences cannot be used as evidence for the irruption of supernatural divine forces. And thus it seems to grow less and less possible to base any religious beliefs on an empirical psychological consideration of religious experience.

It may be asked what we really mean by a "psychological" consideration; and so in this matter we are face to face with the whole question of what we mean by psychology, what the nature and standpoint and function of psychology may be taken to be—a question which is far from having been settled among the psychologists themselves. Is psychology a purely natural and empirical science, as most American psychologists think? Or is it a philosophical science, inseparable in its higher branches from philosophical or normative sciences like logic, ethics, and æsthetics, as is maintained by various schools of idealists.[1] We cannot here discuss that whole question. It is possible that there is room for both kinds of psychology. But the main thing for us to notice is that neither kind could ever possibly *prove* the truth of religious beliefs, just as neither could ever prove the truth of logical or ethical or æsthetic judgments. Neither kind could ever prove the existence of divine realities, just as neither could ever prove the existence of a realm of objective truth or goodness or beauty. The purely empirical psychology has nothing whatever to do, positively or negatively, with the question of the existence of such realms; while the higher kind, if it has anything at all to say about such realms, in a sense *assumes* their existence, and merely aims at exhibiting their nature and laws, as they appear in the various departments of human experience, logical or æsthetic or ethical or religious as the case may be. Neither the one nor the other can succeed in basing religious belief on religious experience.

As regards the empirical psychology: if it is to function as a purely natural and empirical science, then it obviously

[1] Emil Brunner (*op. cit.* pp. 40 ff.) has a valuable criticism of the American psychology of religion from this point of view, which he ascribes to Natorp, the Marburg philosopher.

cannot establish the supernatural, for it cannot be expected to accept any but purely "psychological" explanations. If there are any gaps left, the very assumption of psychology as an empirical science is that they can somehow be filled, that these parts of the phenomena can be brought under general psychological laws, though it has not yet succeeded in seeing how. But then this psychological explanation (which, after all, is simply a description of sequences of psychical states) does not in any way prejudice the higher religious interpretation. It may quite legitimately "explain" certain religious experiences as due to "auto-suggestion." But it cannot say anything for or against the truth of the beliefs connected with these experiences, nor can it say anything for or against the view that what we call auto-suggestion is the work of the Divine Spirit within us.[1] Thus, if empirical psychologists tell us that they can explain everything in the phenomena of religious experience without any supernaturalist hypothesis, and that thus religious experience, empirically considered, affords no evidence of the existence of a divine Being or realm, we can reply that this is precisely what is to be expected. The psychologist may say that the mere fact of religious experience does not prove the existence of the Being whom the religious man says he experiences, since it is all a question of what the man *believes*, and his beliefs are sufficient to explain his religious experiences, so far as an empirical psychology is concerned. But surely that argument cannot be at all embarrassing to believers, since religion itself has always said much the same thing in its own way. Religion has always admitted—nay, insisted—that it is only by believing in God, or by faith, that you can have experi-

[1] Cf. Thouless: "The fact that religious beliefs are fostered by the methods of suggestion is no evidence either of their falsity or of their truth. The only real relevance of this fact to the problem of the truth of religious belief is that it makes impossible any proof of the truth of a religious doctrine from its mere *existence* as a belief. It still remains possible to argue that the belief has characters which give evidence that it is true" (*An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, pp. 265 f. Cf. Balmforth, *Is Christian Experience an Illusion?* pp. 93 f. See also our discussion of "Suggestion" and "Auto-Suggestion" in Chapters II. and IV.).

ence of God, and that its real " evidences " are such as can only be perceived by faith, from the point of view of a believer.[1] Thus we could not expect the phenomena of religious experience to present to the empirical psychologist, as such, any proof of a supernatural realm. Quite naturally, he can " explain " all that he sees without any such hypothesis. Only, that does not mean that there is no room for a higher explanation from a higher point of view.[2]

It may, of course, be contended that such an empirical psychology, looking at religion from the outside, is not worth pursuing at all, that it tells us nothing of the real nature of religion, or of the human mind ; and that a true psychology, and especially a true psychology of religion, must, as it were, not simply look *at* the mind, but enter into the mind and look at the mind's objects—take, in this matter, the point of view of a religious man, look through his eyes, and see the spiritual realm which he sees and which can alone explain the religious workings of his mind. In this sense the study of religious experience would be inseparable from the study of religious truth. Psychology would cease to be a natural, empirical science, and would rise into the realms of theology. That conception of the task and standpoint of the true psychology of religion is maintained by some. Or, to put the same thing in another way, Troeltsch maintains that theology or the philosophy of religion must be more than a psychology of religion—it must be an epistemology of religion. The name of psychology is reserved for the purely empirical study ;

[1] Cf. Karl Heim : " The divine accent which for me at such a moment falls upon the Yea does not depend upon an enhanced inward feeling of happiness, . . . nor upon the strength of the ' religious emotions,' as Schleiermacher thought, nor upon visionary ' irruptions ' from another realm which could be psychologically established in James's sense, nor upon any attestable sign whatever, by which the affirmation could be empirically given preference over the denial and legitimated " (*Glaubensgewissheit*, 3rd. ed., p. 252).

[2] For a useful discussion of the question how far an empirical psychology can be expected to afford any proof of the influence of a divine Being in our lives, see Professor J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 453–8. See also Kenneth Edward, *Religious Experience*, ch. vi.

but the ultimate study of religion, he would say, must not be content with Empiricism as a standpoint (that would be the mistake which he and others call Psychologism): it must advance to what he calls the standpoint of Platonism, it must have a norm of religious truth, it must have a "religious *a priori*" to apply to the varieties of religious experience.[1] This higher kind of study of religious experience, which some would call the true psychology of religion, does, of course, give us religious truths, and indeed becomes theology (the true "theology of experience"). But then it would never profess to *prove* the truths of religion to a person who had not the experience, for it is only in the actual experience of religion that you get that "religious *a priori*," that element of faith, as we may call it, without which the mere phenomena of the religious life, empirically considered from outside, can never give you any religious truth at all.

Thus, whichever view of psychology we adopt, it is plain that we cannot accept the argument which bases faith upon a psychological examination of religious experience.

It may, however, be felt that we have not quite done justice to the argument, but have confined ourselves to its rough-and-ready forms, whereas it can be stated much more subtly and persuasively. For even if it is admittedly impossible to show in any particular instance that a religious experience requires a supernaturalistic hypothesis to explain it, an impressive argument may still be built on the cumulative evidence of a vast variety of religious experience all more or less agreeing in essentials. It may be argued that all the saints and seers and mystics cannot be wrong, because their accounts of the divine things they have experienced tally so remarkably. And is not that a really strong and cogent argument for religious belief? The facts cannot be explained away by the notion that all these

[1] See Ernst Troeltsch, *Psychologie und Erkenntnisstheorie in der Religionswissenschaft*, and the papers on "Empirismus und Platonismus in der Religionsphilosophie" and "Das religiöse Apriori" in the second volume of his *Gesammelte Schriften*.

people started out with religious beliefs, and that these produced the experiences. For, after all, beliefs which have no point of contact with reality do tend to be eliminated by the experience of the ages. That has happened to many religious beliefs. People gradually found out that these beliefs were wrong because, though received in the religious tradition, they did not continue to mediate the religious experience to which they professed to witness. But other beliefs have persisted, and have emerged here and there in all sorts of diverse forms and circumstances, changing their vesture, but never disappearing, because in age after age, being received from the religious tradition, they also mediated to each generation the religious experiences out of which in an earlier age they had grown. Must there not be something in a system of beliefs which thus survives and recurs by proving to be a good guide to the realm of religious experience? An argument of this kind is worked out with great subtlety by a Cambridge scholar, Mr. Will Spens.[1] And is it not a quite valid kind of argument from religious experience to religious belief? Could any honest, earnest man read a well-told story of the religious experiences of the great saints and mystics throughout the ages, agreeing so remarkably as these do, on the whole, in their accounts of that realm of divine realities in which they lived, without feeling that there must be something in it? Would not such an inquirer, coming to the story of the religious experience of the race with an open mind and from an empirical standpoint, be driven to conclude that there must be a realm of divine realities such as the saints professed to know? And would not his argument be a perfectly sound one? Would he not, as G. J. Romanes put it, "gain much evidence against its being a mere psychological illusion from identical reports of it in all ages"?[2]

To this question an affirmative answer may safely be given. But what is the real nature of the argument in that

[1] *Belief and Practice*, especially Lectures I.–V., and the note appended to the Second Edition, pp. 247–59.

[2] G. J. Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 148.

inquirer's mind? It may be that the wonderful story of the religious experience of the saints has evoked an answering chord in his own bosom—has, as it were, "revealed" to him something of what religion really means, something of that realm of divine things, and thus awakened a germ of faith in his own heart. If so, his conclusion is not really a psychologist's empirical conclusion from the phenomena, but a conclusion of personal religious insight—a *faith*, which has indeed been awakened by the story of other men's experience, but is not empirically based on it. But suppose there is no such insight. Suppose the inquirer is absolutely mystified by the whole business, and yet feels tremendously impressed by the remarkably unanimous testimony of the saints, and concludes that there must be something in it, that there must be a God and a spiritual realm, though he cannot see reason in it himself. Such a conclusion would be quite natural. This is, indeed, but a more subtle form of the old argument *e consensu gentium* for the existence of God, which with all its limitations probably carries more weight than any of the three famous "proofs," at least in the modern world. And yet, whatever weight this argument from religious experience to the truth of the beliefs may have, it is surely absurd to suggest that this is the ground upon which a religious man believes, or that this gives us any light upon the real nature of faith. Such an argument may be useful apologetically, to lighten some of faith's difficulties. It may be exceedingly useful also as persuading open minds that it is well worth their while to turn to the realm of religion and endeavour to find those realities concerning which the saints have been so unanimous. But it is only when they do find them that they know what faith is. In the same way a man entirely devoid of musical appreciation might be greatly impressed by the story of "musical experience," and come to the conclusion that there must be something in it, and that the musical men are right. That might persuade him that it was worth his while to put himself in musical training, in the hope of being able to see it for himself with genuine appreciation. But his

mere argument from the observed facts of " musical experience " would not in itself be anything but a preliminary, and has nothing whatever to do with the direct musical insight which alone counts. All that goes without saying in the case of music. But surely it is the same in the case of religion. The presumption of the truth of religion, which may be caused in a man's mind by the impressive unanimity of the witness of the saints to their religious experience, has surely nothing to do with the real ground of faith. At the best it can only rise to a high probability. And in any case that was not the kind of ground that *these saints themselves* had for their faith ; and this latter is, of course, what we wish to discover, and what the man wishes to gain.

Moreover, the argument for religious belief from the impressive array of religious experience, and the remarkably unanimous testimony of the saints, is really just as open to the attacks of modern psychology as any other form of the psychological argument. If this were our only ground for believing in a divine realm, we should be sadly at the mercy of investigators like Professor Freud of Vienna and Dr. Jung of Zurich. On the principles of Jung, the whole of religious experience, its relative uniformity in all ages and lands, the recurrence of the same religious conceptions and beliefs, can all be explained by the " symbolical transformations of the libido." Thus, according to the school of Jung, the religious experience of the race has, indeed, been very real and has played a highly useful part ; but when properly understood it affords no evidence at all of the objective truth of religious beliefs ; for these beliefs are all simply imaginative " projections " from the mind, due to the need for giving symbolic expression and outlet to those instinctive desires which in their naked form are repressed into the mind's subconscious or unconscious regions. They are the dream-thinking of the race. Jung works out this idea with extraordinary ingenuity, thus accounting for the formation and persistence of all the main elements in religious belief throughout the ages, while entirely disbelieving that there is any objective truth in

them at all. God is simply a projection of the " father-imago," and so on.[1] Now all this elaborate construction of Jung's may appear somewhat absurd to a religious reader. But that is because the latter has a better interpretation himself, holding as he does that the fundamental beliefs of religion are true, and its experiences are experiences of a real God. Jung practically starts out with the assumption that there is really no God (and even that the figure of Jesus is mythical) ; and on that assumption his explanation of the religious phenomena may be quite a possible one. But even apart from that assumption, even to those who hold that the fundamental beliefs of religion are true, there may be a considerable amount of truth in Jung's psychological hypotheses. For the defender of religion is not at all concerned to deny that religious beliefs often have taken a semi-mythological form which may be due to something like unconscious symbolical transformations of desire, or even that religious beliefs themselves in a sense arise out of our needs rather than out of " rational " thinking. Professor W. R. Matthews goes so far as to say : " It is of the greatest moment to realize that religious belief has no interest in denying that the idea of God is a projection. What it has strenuously to combat is the doctrine that the idea is nothing more than a projection." [2] Thus the theologian may be quite content to learn something from a system like that of Jung ; and if he objects to much of it, that is not because he objects to the attempt to explain the rise of religious belief as a psychological process by psychological laws, but because he thinks that Jung has largely failed to grasp the real nature of the psychological process, or, in other words, has failed to grasp the real nature of faith. Thus faith need not be at all afraid of psychological investigations like Jung's, so long as it has its own grounds of assurance. But if faith were building itself simply upon

[1] *Psychology of the Unconscious* (which is the English translation of his *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*), especially ch. i. and notes. There is an excellent summary and criticism, which I have found very useful, of Jung's views on religion, in a modest little book quoted above, H. Balmforth's *Is Christian Experience an Illusion* ? pp. 25–37, 87–90.

[2] W. R. Matthews, *The Psychological Approach to Religion*, p. 20.

the impressive spectacle of the religious experience of the ages agreeing so strikingly in its testimony—if we were in that sense endeavouring to found belief upon a contemplation of religious experience—then, indeed, an argument like Jung's would be formidable ; and at least we could never escape from the uneasy suspicion that after all there may be nothing in the testimony of the saints or in the *consensus gentium* which could not be explained by " transformations and symbols of the libido " or some similar hypothesis, and thus, so far as objective religious truth is concerned, explained away. Opinions will, of course, differ very widely as to whether theories like Jung's explain anything at all. But in any case it is plain that the argument from the fact of religious experience to religious belief, however subtly stated, and however impressive and important as a " pedagogue " to lead us towards religion, can never be in itself secure against psychological explaining-away, especially in these days when psychology is professing to dig so deep into the unsuspected mysteries of human nature. Therefore it is highly important for us to recognize that the real grounds of the religious man's faith are different and more inward.

III

We have now seen that our question as to the nature and basis of religious belief cannot be answered by the statement that it is based on religious experience, in whatever sense that statement may be taken. In short, if you have the religious experience yourself, you need not go on to speak of building faith upon it, for you have the faith already, in the experience ; whereas, if you have not the experience yourself, any conclusion as to the existence of God which you might build upon an examination of other people's religious experience would not be faith, and could never take the place of faith, which *is* religious experience. Therefore, whatever may be the usefulness of the phrase or the idea, it does not in itself provide a solution of our problem, and when thus employed to designate the basis of faith, it only provides confusion.

In the recent literature of religion, accordingly, there are unmistakable signs of dissatisfaction with the phrase, or at least of reaction from the free use of it as an " Open Sesame." " Its use," says one writer, " has no doubt been promoted by a certain convenient ambiguity which hangs about it." [1] It has, of course, often been remarked that many writers who speak of religious experience tend to think only or mainly of highly emotional experiences, and this may produce an unhealthy emphasis. Moreover, the use of the phrase may have the danger of pointing religious thought in a too subjective direction, towards the scrutiny of one's own feelings. And if it in any way tended to displace the idea of faith, or to suggest that there is something in the religious life more ultimate than faith, the phrase might encourage a seriously misleading view of the nature of the religious life, and might foster not only confusion but a certain amount of unreality and cant. Signs are not lacking that these dangers are being felt. An Oxford scholar tells us : " The saint is conscious primarily of God, and the study of his religious experience is a secondary study in which he may have little or no interest at all. Happy indeed for him if he has none " ; and goes on to speak of " the danger of becoming over-introspective, and of ceasing to think directly and deeply about God, sin, and redemption, because we are wholly occupied with our own religious experiences." [2] Similar reasons have led various writers to express dissatisfaction with the familiar phrase. Professor Hoernlé says that " it is best, perhaps, to follow those writers who speak of religion as an ' attitude ' rather than as an ' experience.' " [3] Mr. Balmforth, in a lucid little book, speaks of " the one simple and comprehensive term—faith," and says, " ' Faith,' too, strikes a note which is very necessary, and which might not be caught in the phrase ' religious experience ' ; for it makes clear that element of limitation in man's knowledge of

[1] *Times Literary Supplement*, 18th November 1926, p. 812.

[2] L. Hodgson, *The Place of Reason in Christian Apologetic*, pp. 67 f.

[3] R. F. Alfred Hoernlé, *op. cit.* p. 184.

God." [1] Dean Inge speaks of "what it has become the fashion to call religious experience," [2] as if he meant that the phrase had been used too much; and Professor Weinel speaks of the phrase as one "which in the last generation became much too fashionable." [3]

But the most notable revolt against the phrase and everything for which it stands is found in the quite new school of theologians in Germany, of which Emil Brunner (who has already been quoted) is a member, along with Barth, Gogarten, and Thurneysen.[4] We have seen that Schleiermacher may be regarded as the father of the experience-theology; and accordingly the new school deplores his influence in the modern world, and looks forward to a reaction.[5] Professor Weinel tells us, indeed, that in this school "nothing is more detested than the phrase 'religious' experience." [6] Brunner's whole contention, in the interesting book from which we have already been quoting, is that religion must be regarded neither as "knowledge" (*Erkenntnis*) in an intellectualistic sense nor as "experience" (*Erlebnis*) in the sense of Schleiermacher and the psychologists (these two views are the "false objectivity" and the "false subjectivity"), but as *faith*. He claims, moreover, that in this revolt from the emphasis on experience, in this fight against "religious psychologism," he is standing in the succession of St. Paul and Martin Luther. This is indeed, according to Brunner, the real significance of Luther's passionate contention for

[1] H. Balmforth, *op. cit.* pp. 9 f.

[2] W. R. Inge, *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, p. 26.

[3] In the article quoted below.

[4] An account of the new school in general is given by Dr. Adolf Keller of Zurich in two articles entitled "A Theology of Crisis" in the *Expositor* for March and April 1925.

[5] See Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis, und Glaube*, 2nd and 3rd eds., p. 38 and footnote, where Schleiermacher's prestige in the modern world is declared to be a clear sign of our unhealthy "psychologistic" tendency. A somewhat similar attitude to Schleiermacher is taken by Professor Karl Heim of Tübingen, who is in many ways akin to Brunner, especially in his insistence on faith as the central conception. See his *Glaubensgewissheit*, especially pp. 252 ff., and also pp. 45 ff.

[6] In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1924, p. 275.

salvation by faith alone : it was a contention for the vitally important truth that religion ought to be looking away from all inner experiences of the human soul to God Himself. " If faith's certainty is to be dependent on the results of self-scrutiny, we shall simply never attain to certainty, but shall be left clinging to anxious speculations." Thus Luther contended for a kind of religion quite different from that of " mystical and pietistic experiences of grace " ; and, according to Brunner, that is why the modern mind (with its fashion of " religious experience ") is far less attracted by Luther than by the mystics. In the modern world " people either attempt to reinterpret faith as some sort of mystical emotional experience, and to make Luther himself a ' religious genius,' or they brand faith (with the catchword ' dogma-faith ') as ' secondhand religion ' which is of no importance compared with the primary mystical experience." [1] It is for this reason that Brunner and the school to which he belongs revolt so decisively from the use of the phrase " religious experience," which they consider harmful, as tending to displace the vital idea of faith.

It is easy for us to sympathize with some of the motives of this revolt. But it would be a great pity to let them blind us to the great value of the phrase and the idea. For if we have seen it to be merely confusing to speak of faith as based on religious experience, since these two are one and the same thing, it is highly useful to have learnt that faith *can* thus fitly be spoken of as an " experience." Moreover, it seems quite legitimate and useful to say that *doctrine* must be based on religious experience, provided we remember that doctrines are not, as Schleiermacher tried to make out,

[1] Emil Brunner, *op. cit.* pp. 35–8. It is important to note that in his repudiation of mysticism, in which he is quite at one with the Ritschlians (from whom he differs on other grounds), Brunner thinks it necessary to point out an ambiguity in the term " mysticism," and to protest against the inclusion of a really " objective " spirit like Meister Eckhart with subjective mystics like St. Catherine (see footnote on p. 36 of the book quoted). We may compare this with Baron von Hügel's distinction between " inclusive " or true mysticism and " exclusive " or pseudo-mysticism (see *The Mystical Element of Religion*, new ed., vol. ii. pp. 290–91).

" utterances regarding religious states of mind," but utterances concerning objective divine realities which are already implicit in all our faith (or our religious experience) and have simply to be made explicit—that is the sense in which they are based on the experience. In the same way, and with still less risk of confusion, it can be said that *theology* must be based upon religious experience. But the emphasis should be as much on the word " religious " as on the word " experience," if we are to learn the true lesson ; and, indeed, this is just the same as to say that theology must be based on faith. In other words, theology has to discover and systematize the faith-judgments which are inherent in religious experience. It has to let faith speak, to make religion articulate. But if the use of the word " faith " here reminds us that theology cannot evolve its doctrines in a purely " rationalistic " way, the use of the word " experience " reminds us, on the other hand, that the faith on which we are building is something quite different from a mere acceptance of dogmas from tradition or authority, and that it may even come to the soul without any very explicit doctrinal content at all. Thus the lesson of the experience-theology is a highly important one for us to learn, and the phrase " religious experience " is one which has permanently enriched theological thinking, and has surely come to stay.

And yet it does not in itself solve our present problem as to the basis of belief. To have seen that faith and religious experience are one and the same thing is to have learnt something about faith ; but we still have upon our hands the fundamental question what this faith really is and what it is based on ; and we shall have to continue our search for an answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FAITH AND THE WILL-TO-BELIEVE

SYNOPSIS

In this chapter we discuss the doctrine of the " will-to-believe " as another possible answer to our question.

I. This view will always be associated with William James : the view that the essence of faith, as distinct from other kinds of conviction, is that it is *a voluntary choosing to believe.* His defence of such " voluntarily adopted faith " was novel, but the general idea is not so new as is often supposed (Anticipations of it cited from Thomas Aquinas (with a difference) ; Pascal (whom James himself quotes) ; and John Venn the logician, and G. J. Romanes the scientist, in the modern world).

II. James was right in connecting faith with the will, but he was wrong in making the connexion one of *consciously willing to believe,* for that is (not so much immoral as) *impossible.* In the Middle Ages doubters were counselled to suppress their doubts and make themselves believe, but this was because both doubters and counsellors shared the fundamental belief in the doctrinal authority of the Church, so that it was not really a counsel of the pure " will-to-believe." A Modernist Catholic, too, would give quite different counsel (*e.g.*, Baron von Hügel's letter to a perplexed mother).

III. If it is thus impossible directly to " will to believe," neither can we help out this doctrine by means of the idea of " auto-suggestion." For faith is a *condition* of successful auto-suggestion, and therefore cannot be its product. Moreover the attempt to create faith in one's heart by going through the exercises of religion (which some would dub pure auto-suggestion) may have the very opposite effect to that which is intended (as is illustrated by the case of Tolstoy).

IV. The appeal to the " will-to-believe," as often practised, is not really an appeal to voluntary choice, but to *a deeper conviction* which the doubter still has underneath all his doubts, as is admirably illustrated by the case of George Tyrrell. Thus the " venture of faith " is never a sheer blind venture.

V. If the doubter cannot find any shred of religious conviction in his heart, the ultimate appeal is to his moral convictions. These at least he cannot doubt in practice ; and he can follow these faithfully, and wait for faith (cf. the advice given by F. W. Robertson). This is what James leaves no room for : the idea of waiting for faith as a *gift of God.* But while the doctrine of the will-to-believe excludes this vital aspect of the truth (that faith is a thing which *comes* to us, as an " experience "), it has taught us the important truth that *faith is somehow conditioned by the will.*

CHAPTER IV

Faith and the Will-to-Believe

"There has arisen," says Professor Pratt, "a very common feeling, which would have been almost incomprehensible to many scholastics of the Middle Ages, that one's faith, so far as he has any, must be based on 'the will to believe.'"[1] It is this theory of the nature and basis of faith that we must consider in the present chapter. It is certainly widespread in the modern world.

I

This doctrine will always be associated with the great name of William James. His book, *The Will to Believe*, which has had such an enormous influence in popularizing the phrase, appeared in 1897, but the essay from which it took its title had appeared as a magazine article in the previous year, and had originally been given as an address to a student audience in an American college. In that address, moreover, James was but giving more definite expression to a doctrine which he had long been proclaiming to his own students, out of a profound conviction, and with the quite practical purpose of counteracting the undue tendency towards rationalistic agnosticism which might be found among university students. Thus we are here transported out of the theoretical atmosphere of the study into an arena of practical issues, where we can see faith rising up to do battle with doubt, and can watch it coming to its own; and it is perhaps in this conscious dealing with doubt, even more than in the case of the simple believer, that faith will exhibit to us its true nature and basis.

[1] James Bisset Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 20.

Moreover, as regards the particular doctrine now before us, Professor Pratt has given the following impressive testimony (in another book, published in 1909): "I think I shall be justified in saying that James's *Will to Believe* has been one of the greatest influences for genuine religious faith that have appeared in the last half-century." [1] If this is anything like true, the doctrine must be well worthy of consideration in our present quest.

The whole intention of James in his famous essay was to uphold "the lawfulness of voluntarily adopted faith." [2] But, indeed, his real thesis is that all faith is voluntarily adopted. That is for him the very meaning of faith as distinct from knowledge—that in the absence of absolutely conclusive demonstration and irresistible conviction, it depends in the last resort on an act of will, a choosing to believe. In another essay in the same volume he says: "Faith means belief in something concerning which doubt is still theoretically possible." [3] Doubt being thus theoretically possible, absolute certainty in religious matters being unattainable, and life being urgent, a man has to choose. Not that he can believe anything he likes, merely by willing to do so—James's theory is not as crude as that. It is only in the case of "live options" between reasonable possibilities that the will can tilt the beam on one side or the other; and it is because of the urgency of life and the importance of having some belief that it is legitimate for us in these great matters to bring "our willing nature," our volition, into the game. Of course we do this frequently in every department of life. But in the realm of religious belief may it not be necessary, if we are to have any faith at all? May not religious truth be of such a kind that we can never find it at all unless we make overtures towards it with our wills, in advance of intellectual conviction? If it be contended that we ought to guard against the influence of our wills on our beliefs instead of encouraging it, and should always wait for conclusive evidence, James

[1] James Bisset Pratt, *What is Pragmatism?* p. 194.
[2] *The Will to Believe*, p. 2. [3] *Ibid.* p. 90.

answers that it is impossible to wait, since life goes on, and suspension of judgment is equivalent to unbelief, so far as life is concerned. James was speaking to a generation which seemed to have learnt too well the lessons of Victorian scientists like Huxley and Tyndall regarding intellectual honesty. These men had spoken of the immorality and sinfulness of believing anything upon insufficient evidence, and there had spread a cult of high-minded and perhaps almost self-righteous agnosticism, at the solemn assurance of which James ventured to poke fun, as he opposed it with his doctrine of "voluntarily adopted faith." His argument is as novel as it is persuasive.

Yet there is nothing new under the sun, and perhaps this doctrine was not so new or so peculiar to James as is often supposed. Mr. Schiller speaks as if there had been no kind of reaction against intellectualism in the philosophical world until James wrote this essay. He tells us that the "intellectualist theory of human belief contrived to maintain itself as orthodoxy until William James assailed it, and scandalized academic philosophy by pointing not only to the undeniable existence of a Will to believe as a psychical fact, but also to the logical possibilities of drawing conclusions by its aid." [1] This is surely somewhat of an exaggeration, for James's revolt against intellectualism was part of a widespread anti-intellectualist movement in philosophy, which was significantly heralded in Britain by Mr. (now the Earl of) Balfour's book, *The Foundations of Belief*, to which James refers in his essay. The doctrine of the will-to-believe is, of course, something more definite, but even this is, perhaps, older than is supposed. We found Professor Pratt remarking that this idea would have been almost incomprehensible to many Scholastics of the Middle Ages. Yet it would not have been anything like as surprising to them as to the Huxleys and Tyndalls of the modern world. The older theologians knew very well that faith had some connexion with the will; and the Scholastics had something very like a doctrine of the will-

[1] F. C. S. Schiller, *Problems of Belief*, p. 109.

to-believe, though with a difference. We need not even think of Duns Scotus and his successors, who stood for the primacy of will over intellect, and whose Nominalism was a kind of forerunner of Pragmatism : we may take Thomas Aquinas himself. According to Aquinas, the very meritoriousness of faith (which is an important consideration for his system) is due to the fact that, the reasons for belief being inconclusive, the will has to come to the aid of the intellect. This does not mean that it is entirely an act of will, quite arbitrarily choosing its beliefs : that would be wholly alien to the minds of Thomas Aquinas and William James alike. The intellect can, according to Aquinas, perceive that it is both possible and good to believe the Christian mysteries. But it has no absolutely conclusive reasons for believing them. There is still room for doubt. It is here that the will comes in, and inclines the intellect to acceptance, because it is good to believe these things ; and this voluntary choice, based on the highest motives, is what distinguishes faith psychologically from knowledge. So far, this is extraordinarily like the analysis given by James. There is, however, one very important and characteristic difference, to which we shall have to return in our criticism. The will does not, according to Aquinas, choose the doctrines of the faith directly : it chooses them on the authority of the Church. That is what the will really inclines the intellect to accept. The intellect can be given good reasons for this, too, but perhaps not quite conclusive reasons ; and, in any case, the intellect would not of itself naturally accept anything in that highly indirect way of obedience to authority. But, at the bidding of the will, it accepts the authority of the Christian revelation in Bible or Church, and thus wills to believe things which it cannot know ; and this is faith. This factor of an absolute authority doubtless removes the doctrine far from the world of William James. But Dr. Philip Wicksteed finds " underlying the whole exposition a true and searching analysis of the psychology of conversion, of religious conviction, and of doubt " ; and perhaps the whole analysis (which, Dr. Wicksteed assures us, arose out of the depths of Aquinas'

own experience) is profounder, within its medieval limits, than that of James.[1] It is certainly a notable illustration of the antiquity of the general idea of the will-to-believe—an idea which, in this form at least, is really much more congenial to the medievalist than to the modernist type of mind. An able layman of our time, a convert to the Church of Rome, Bernard Holland, has given a simple and persuasive expression of this idea of faith as based on a voluntary acceptance of authority, taking St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas as his masters.[2]

James himself, of course, was aware that the germ of his doctrine was to be found in Pascal's famous "Wager" argument. In Pascal's argument the sceptic protests (just like Huxley and Tyndall) that it is wrong to choose to believe when the reasons are not conclusive. Pascal replies that one *must* make a choice, either to believe or not to believe—there is no escape ; and that, in view of what is at stake, it is reasonable for the mind to *choose to believe*.[3] This is not intended, indeed, as an account of the real nature of faith, or of the grounds of Pascal's own faith, but rather as an *argumentum ad hominem*, a last appeal to a sceptic who was not yet within reach of any other argument. Yet it is a defence of "voluntarily adopted faith." A contemporary of Pascal's is quoted as saying of the Orthodox Catholics of his time : "With most of them the wish to believe takes the place of actual belief. Their will assents to what their intellect desires." [4]

It is a far cry from either St. Thomas or Pascal to the intellectual world which was created for James's generation by the nineteenth-century conflict between science and religion, and which was the natural setting for his essay. But it is possible to point to remarkable anticipations of James's idea in the very midst of that conflict. One interest-

[1] In the above account I have depended on the deeply interesting passage in P. H. Wicksteed's *The Reactions between Dogma and Philosophy Illustrated from the Works of S. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 176–96, and the full illustrative extracts from the text of Aquinas on pp. 214–22.

[2] Bernard Holland, *Belief and Freedom.*

[3] Pascal, *Pensées* (ed. Brunschvicg), iii. 233.

[4] Quoted by J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 218.

ing example will be found in the Hulsean Lectures for 1869, *On Some of the Characteristics of Belief, Scientific and Religious*,[1] delivered by the Cambridge philosopher John Venn, who is better known as a logician than as a theologian. In more ways than one these lectures remind us of James's essay. Like the essay, they were delivered to a University audience, and it is plain that one of their main purposes also was to guard the students against the tendency to scepticism or agnosticism which may exist in such an academic atmosphere, by emphasizing some neglected factors in belief. It is curious, too, that Venn, like James, uses Pascal's " Wager " argument as an illustration, though rejecting it more definitely.[2] The following passage will surprise those who think the intellectualist theory of belief had never been questioned, or the influence of the will upon belief recognized, until James wrote : " We may say, I think, that the causes which together produce in any man that particular group of convictions which we call his belief, may be divided into two classes. They are partly logical, partly psychological or personal. The former are hardly at all dependent on the will, the latter to a very considerable extent are so."[3] That might almost be a quotation from James's essay. Moreover, Venn not only points this out as a fact, but, like James, justifies it in the interests of religion. On a later page we read : " May we not offer some justification of a practice which is often condemned as a sophistical tampering with one's conscience ; I mean the practice of endeavouring to believe, of putting oneself into favourable circumstances for producing one conviction rather than another."[4] Venn, like James, was very well aware of the contempt sometimes poured on such a practice by scientists and philosophers. This question of the legitimacy of loading the dice in favour of faith is precisely the issue raised in James's essay ; and

[1] Macmillan, 1870.

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 61 ff., and Appendix.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 65 f. This is obviously an anticipation of Lord Balfour's distinction between *reasons* and *causes* of belief.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 80.

though Venn does not go as far as James in defending the will-to-believe, he does, on the whole, throw in his lot with those who give an affirmative answer in the interests of religious faith, rather than with those who give a negative answer in the interests of scientific impartiality. Here, then, is a defence of the practice of "endeavouring to believe," nearly thirty years before James wrote.

Another anticipation of the doctrine of the will-to-believe may be found in G. J. Romanes, who in his whole development from unbelief to Christian faith is one of the most typical figures of that conflict between science and religion in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is particularly interesting to find this distinguished scientist, who had passed through a period of complete religious agnosticism, protesting, like William James, against Huxley's idea that faith had been proved a "cardinal sin" by science, and arguing that will must come to the aid of intellect if there is to be any religious faith at all. "We 'believe' in the theory of evolution on grounds of reason alone. . . . But no one can 'believe' in God, or *a fortiori* in Christ, without also a severe effort of will. This I hold to be a matter of fact, whether or not there be a God or a Christ." [1] "This influence of will on belief" is found in other matters than religion. But whether that be good or bad in other matters, "who shall say it is not exactly as it ought to be in the matter of beliefs religious?" [2] Like James, Romanes betrays the influence of Pascal.

All this is sufficient to show how much the general idea of the "will-to-believe" was in the air before James wrote his famous essay, which turned it into a definite theory and made it a familiar possession of religious thought.[3] We must now go on to discuss it, as a theory of the distinctive nature and basis of faith.

[1] G. J. Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 131.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 134 f.

[3] I do not know enough about the philosophy of Ollé-Laprune and Blondel in France to speak of them in this connexion. Blondel had actually used the term *pragmatisme* before James, but gave it up when he found James using it for a theory with which he did not agree. See J. Alexander Gunn, *Modern French Philosophy*, pp. 86 ff.

II

It is impossible to read James's essay even after thirty years without feeling that he has blown a breeze of fresh air into a somewhat musty atmosphere, and awakened us to some truths which we had been too apt to suppress or ignore. The most obvious objections are met in advance, the idea of intellectual sincerity is accepted as eagerly as a Huxley or a Tyndall could wish, and the appearance of cant is shifted rather to the side of those who pretend that all their beliefs are based upon irresistible conviction. It is healthy to be reminded that " pure insight and logic, whatever they might do ideally, are not the only things that do really produce our creeds." Moreover, as regards the peculiar essence of religious faith, James is surely correct in connecting it closely with the will. It is conditioned—so faith itself has often claimed—less by an acute intellect than by a right will. We cannot exactly *prove* it, and in the absence of proof our faith does sometimes seem to be, in the last resort, a matter of choosing the nobler way, a protest of the heart which refuses to believe the worst and claims to believe the best.

But having gone so far, we cannot help pausing and questioning. Surely a deeper analysis is required. Surely James has not quite correctly described the connexion of faith with the will, when he makes it a direct connexion of consciously " willing to believe." If this were really the issue, we should perhaps be disposed to agree with Clifford and Huxley that it is immoral to believe when we are not really convinced. But it would be more accurate to say that it is *impossible* so to believe by a mere effort of will. Our beliefs on various subjects may, indeed, be determined by many factors besides purely logical or reasonable considerations ; but surely it is the result of a false analysis to number direct voluntary choice among these factors. The human mind, we are now being taught, is not so purely rational an organism as philosophers have sometimes supposed, and it is doubtless led to accept its beliefs by all sorts of " causes " which are not " reasons " at all. The

new psychology has done much to reveal these unsuspected mysteries of the mind's working, and delights in exposing our "reasons" as mere "rationalizations" of processes which in themselves were non-rational. But even the new psychology is clear that all this can only go on below the threshold of consciousness. It is not a conscious choosing of our beliefs, for we cannot do that. The magic is gone as soon as the wish is dragged to the surface and exposed. Whatever our wishes may be, conscious voluntary choice of our beliefs is impossible. James Ward put the matter with his usual acumen: "It is obvious . . . that the process must be indirect. A man may wish to believe, he cannot—strictly speaking—will to believe; though he may deliberately set about deceiving others, he cannot avowedly and straightway set about deceiving himself."[1] Many a perplexed soul, indeed, has found to his sorrow that the more he wished and tried to believe, the clearer it became to him that he did not believe. The more he concentrated his will upon conquering his doubts, the more stubbornly did they raise their heads. Moreover, this is quite in line with recent discoveries of psychology. It is a case of what psychologists call "the Law of Reversed Effort." The conscious effort by an act of will to suppress doubt will have the very opposite effect to what is desired. Thus it is impossible really to will oneself into believing. Of course, it is quite possible to *pretend* to believe—to pretend to other people or even to ourselves. And it is significant that in one of those passages quoted from Huxley, it is really the pretending to believe that he mentions with such disgust. Perhaps that is what is really in the minds of those who speak so indignantly and contemptuously about letting the will affect the beliefs; they are thinking of the practice of drugging the mind into a pretence of orthodoxy, not out of any moral necessity, but for motives of expediency, with an eye to inward or outward comfortableness and ease. That, of course, is immoral, as James would be the first to admit. That is pretending, not willing, to believe. But, after all, that is all you can do voluntarily. You can make

[1] James Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 355.

yourself seem to believe, but not really believe. You can also, of course, voluntarily choose to act in line with the belief which you wish you possessed. You can, as Pascal advised, in case of doubt, take holy water and have masses said. You can, in Venn's words, "put yourself into favourable circumstances for producing" belief, and in a sense that may be justifiable. But may not that be because, while you can hardly claim to be as yet a believer, you have a deep presentiment that the believing side is the true side, and you wish to give that side every chance? You are not really foreclosing the issue by a free choice. You are not really willing yourself into believing, voluntarily adopting the belief. That is precisely what you cannot do. In short, you cannot make yourself believe, and you dare not pretend.

All this will become clearer if we bring it to a still more practical issue, and imagine a spiritual director endeavouring to deal with an actual case of intellectual perplexity, the case of an honest doubter, eager to find positive light and assurance in the matter of religion, but unable to find them, unable to believe. What kind of help and counsel would the wise spiritual director give him? Would he advise the doubter to make up his mind to believe, by an act of will?

In the Middle Ages we can, indeed, imagine the director giving such advice to a penitent who confessed doubt about any of the doctrines of the Church, in accordance with what we saw to be the teaching of Aquinas. But even then it would be on the assumption that director and doubter had common ground in the authority of the Church itself, and that the incursions of doubt were manifestly temptations of the devil which could be directly resisted by the will, like any other temptation. St. Louis, who was precisely contemporary with Aquinas, used to give such advice for those beset with doubts "as to some points of the faith." This is how his seneschal Joinville summarizes his counsel: "We should so guard and defend ourselves from this snare, as to say to the Enemy, when he sends such a temptation: 'Away!' Yes, 'Away!' must one say to the

Enemy. 'Thou shalt not tempt me so that I cease to believe firmly all the articles of the faith.'" [1] From that point of view the doubter could naturally be exhorted to "will to believe" the doctrine because it was taught by the Church. But this would not be a pure case of the will-to-believe; for, though there was a doubt as to certain particular "points of the faith," there would still be the underlying conviction that the faith must, after all, be right. It would not really be a situation of universal doubt. The typical doubt of the Middle Ages was concerning the miracle of transubstantiation,[2] and there would be a large background of belief in the general teaching of the Church. Dr. Wicksteed has a fine passage in which he seeks to get insight "into the state of mind of an actual 'doubter' in the thirteenth century," illustrating it by that beautiful story which follows on what we have quoted in Joinville's *Chronicle*. A great master of divinity wept bitterly as he confessed to the Bishop of Paris, "I doubt me I am an unbeliever, for I cannot drive my heart to believe in the sacrament of the altar, as holy Church teaches it; yet well I know that it is a temptation of the enemy." Having ascertained that the doubter did not take pleasure in his doubts, but was rather deeply grieved by them, and was heartily loyal to the Church, the Bishop changed the subject and began to talk about the war with England. "Now I will ask you a question: If the King had given you La Rochelle on the perilous frontier to defend, and had given me the castle of Montlhéry to hold, which is in the very heart of France, in a land at peace, to which would the King owe the more grace at the end of the war—to you, who had held La Rochelle, or to me, who had held the castle of Montlhéry?" The doubter replied, "Why, in God's name, sire, to me who had held La Rochelle." And then the Bishop comforted him by telling him that *his* heart, with its doubts, was like the castle of La Rochelle which was so hard to hold, and that he was much higher in God's

[1] Joinville's *Chronicle of the Crusade of St. Louis* (Sir Frank Marzials' translation) (Everyman's Library), pp. 145 f.

[2] See P. H. Wicksteed, *op. cit.* p. 191.

regard than others who (like the good Bishop himself) had no battles to fight with doubt.[1] It is very illuminating to see how here the spiritual director frankly looks upon such doubt as a thing to be simply and directly fought against, by an effort of the will-to-believe ; and still more, how even the very doubter assumes that the doubt is an assault of the evil one. "That is to say," writes Dr. Wicksteed, "he was convinced all the time that the thing he could not 'believe' (*i.e.* whole-heartedly accept as 'certain') was really true all the same." Dr. Wicksteed quite agrees that in those days the advice to a doubter would have been "to force his intelligence into submission" by willing to believe the doctrine ; but he points out, in the light of that story, and the general principles of Aquinas, that this would have been regarded as justifiable only because of the fundamental assumption shared even by the doubter, that his doubt was a temptation of the devil, and that the faith was really right, after all. That is, the doubter was really a believer; he had an underlying faith in his heart all the time, and that was what made it his duty to bend his intellect into belief on the particular point in question. Otherwise the attempt to force belief, or the appearance of it, would have been wrong. Aquinas quotes Paul's words : "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and applies them in the sense that, while belief in Christ is a good thing, the voluntary choice of such belief, when our reason and conscience go against it, would be "an evil volition."[2] So that even here in the Middle Ages the pure doctrine of the will-to-believe disappears from the theory and practice of the spiritual director.

But we shall be on ground much nearer to ourselves, and shall see the point still more clearly, if we try to imagine the advice that would be given by a wide-awake spiritual counsellor in the modern world to a religious seeker whose doubts were more general. He would not advise the

[1] The story will be found in Joinville's *Chronicle* (Everyman's Library), pp. 146 f.

[2] P. H. Wicksteed, *op. cit.* pp. 176–94.

doubter simply to suppress his doubts and make up his mind to believe. Neither would he, on the other hand, confine himself to mere argument in an attempt to prove the faith, though he would attempt to remove difficulties. He would certainly appeal to the *will* of the doubter ; yet not in the sense of counselling him to " will to believe," but rather as endeavouring to set his will right so that he could go to meet the truth with a humble and receptive heart. And for this part of the appeal we need not speculate, but may point again to an outstanding example, provided by a modernist divine of that Church which was the mother of Aquinas and the good Bishop of Paris. It is that long and remarkable letter which was written by Baron von Hügel to a perplexed and broken-hearted mother, on the death of her little daughter of eighteen months after a long illness, and in answer to the question " how such suffering could be permitted by a God said to be all-good and all-powerful." [1] Before coming to his apologetical argument regarding the facts and realities of which she was inclined to be in doubt, the Baron spends the greater part of his long and careful letter in recommending to the lady " certain habits of mind and certain spiritual practices which (I am very sure) are simply necessary for any true apprehension of those facts and realities." He means, primarily at least, the disposition to be " non-contentious and non-controversial ; to be athirst for wisdom, not for cleverness ; to be humble and simple, or (at least) to feel a wholesome shame at not being so ; to be just *straight*, and anxious for some light, and ready to pay for it and to practise it." " Drop brain, open wide the soul, nourish the heart, purify, strengthen the will : with this, you are sure to grow ; without this, you are certain to shrink." [2] These, according to the Baron, are the first of the " preliminaries to religious belief " (we need not follow his profound letter further) ; and they remind us strangely of James's warning that " one

[1] It is published under the title " On the Preliminaries to Religious Belief, and on the Facts of Suffering, Faith and Love," in Baron von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (1st series).

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 98 f.

who should shut himself up in snarling logicality and try to make the gods extract his recognition willy-nilly, or not get it at all, might cut himself off for ever from his only opportunity of making the gods' acquaintance." [1] This is just where we were disposed to agree with James. But this does not carry us on to the counsel of the will-to-believe, but rather reminds us how much more impracticable such counsel is for a doubter in the modern world than it was even in the Middle Ages. Your doubter would simply reply that the thing cannot be done. It is impossible to believe by mere volition.

III

It may be thought, however, that we can help out the doctrine of the will-to-believe if we introduce the idea of "auto-suggestion," and this will be a convenient point at which to consider this idea, so prominent in the modern psychology of religion. It is a commonplace of the newer psychology that suggestion can do what conscious effort cannot do. If a doubt has been suggested to our minds, we cannot dispose of it by a conscious effort of will, but it may be possible to dispose of it, and to reinstate the belief which had been questioned, by a process of auto-suggestion, and thus to circumvent the Law of Reversed Effort by operating through the region of the subconscious. Thus if a man decided that positive religious belief would be a help to him in his practical life, he might, instead of attempting either to prove the beliefs or to adopt them by an effort of will, begin to observe practices which would "suggest" the beliefs to his mind, until he came to believe them. After all, this had its place even in Pascal's argument. In the famous passage the sceptic protests that with the best will in the world he *cannot* believe. Pascal replies that, at least, he can act as if he believed; he can begin to take holy water and have masses said. "That will make you believe and will dull your wits (*vous abêtira*)." This looks very like auto-suggestion. And it might be

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 28.

contended that all "religious practice," all "spiritual exercises," all recited creeds, all ritual, are but methods of auto-suggestion, calculated to produce faith in the heart, not by presenting logical reasons, but by putting the mind into a susceptible condition and suggesting the desired beliefs. It is told of one of the great divines of German Pietism that, in a time of utter doubt as to the truth of religion, he fell on his knees and prayed, "O God, if Thou art, attest Thyself to me," with the result that faith sprang up in his heart;[1] and this would be put down by many psychologists as the work of auto-suggestion. And so a doubter, who was convinced of his practical need of religious faith, might set about voluntarily adopting it, not by a direct act of will, but by these indirect methods. Despairing of all cogent proof, yet feeling that he could not live without religious faith, or, at least, that this was "the noblest hypothesis," he might resolve to accustom himself to believing by attending church and practising the observances of religion. This seems reasonable enough. A man cannot directly will himself into believing, but he can resolve to act as if he believed, and can perhaps thus produce the belief. And thus the doctrine of the will-to-believe appears to escape its difficulties when helped out by the doctrine of auto-suggestion. Can we be satisfied with this?

There need be no controversy as to the considerable part played by auto-suggestion in the phenomena of the religious life. But to the present writer it seems clear that the one element in the religious life which cannot safely be so explained is precisely that central element called "faith" on which all the rest depends. Moreover, the plain truth seems to be that while many of the fruits of religion, the peace that comes through prayer, the conquest of evil thoughts and desires, and the "spiritual healing" of bodily ailments, may conceivably be explained from a psychological point of view as the work of "auto-suggestion," this cannot be said of *faith*, for the simple reason

[1] Told by Ihmels, *Wie werden wir der christlichen Wahrheit gewiss?* 3rd ed., p. 38. The divine was August Hermann Francke.

that faith is the *condition* of successful auto-suggestion. In other words, it is faith that does the suggesting. It is faith that does, in the battle against worry and lust and pain, what conscious effort and struggle cannot do ; simply because faith, instead of *struggling* for the victory (which in these cases may be worse than useless), is already assured of the victory, and by persuading the subconscious of this and thus enlisting its aid, achieves the victory by what psychologists call " auto-suggestion." Thus faith is the condition. This consideration is supported by some of the more philosophical writers on the psychology of religion. " Religious faith," says Dr. Thouless, " provides in perfection the conditions for the subjective working of prayer to become effective as auto-suggestion ; conditions, let it be noted, which cannot be reproduced by using the form of prayer without the faith." [1] " From the theoretical point of view," writes Dr. William Brown, " I think we can say that suggestion is ultimately always dependent upon some form or other of faith, and not conversely." " The individual may not consciously hold such a faith, but somewhere in his mind there is that faith, the belief in a friendliness somewhere, and if he is completely lacking in it, then he will be completely inaccessible to therapeutic suggestion." [2] Some people are, of course, alarmed at the introduction of such an element into the psychology of religion at all. But the use of it as a psychological " explanation " seems really quite innocuous [3] so long as one recognizes that faith itself cannot, even from the point of view of an empirical psychology, be so explained ; *i.e.* so long as faith is retained in our account in some sense which can give the whole process a connexion with objective truth and reality. And that is just what even the

[1] R. H. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, p. 172. Cf. J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 335 f.

[2] W. Brown in *Science, Religion, and Reality*, ed. by J. Needham, p. 317. Dr. Brown thinks that auto-suggestion is badly named, because " it is really something more akin to faith than to suggestion " (p. 314).

[3] Cf. H. Balmforth, *op. cit.* pp. 93 f. He writes : " The believer in the validity of religious experience is not concerned to repudiate wholly the idea of ' auto-suggestion ' in his experience."

newer psychology at its best leaves room for. It makes auto-suggestion dependent on an underlying faith; and thus faith cannot be *produced* by auto-suggestion.

It may be felt, however, that religious practice does seem to include methods not only of "suggesting" peace and health and victory *by means of* faith, but also of creating faith itself by suggestion. Dr. Thouless remarks that "in devotional books are to be found a simple form of prayer called *acts*, which are almost purely auto-suggestions and are intended as such"; and he quotes one such "act of faith," which is for the most part a simple profession of belief in the main doctrines of Christianity.[1] But it seems questionable whether the use of such exercises is a case of auto-suggestion in the strict sense, or, at least, whether the element of suggestion can play more than a subsidiary part. Sometimes this may be a method of *habituating* the mind to a belief which it already possesses on more solid grounds. This is what Pascal means in one interesting passage. "As soon as the mind has seen where the truth lies, we should have recourse to custom, in order to soak and steep ourselves in this belief, which is continually slipping away from us; for it is too much trouble to have the proofs always present to our minds. We must acquire an easier way of believing—namely, that of habit, which without violence or artifice or argument makes us believe the things, and inclines all our powers to this belief, so that our minds fall naturally into it." [2] The passage may make us reflect how much more psychology Pascal knew than anyone else of his age. But it is interesting to note that he speaks of this process, of educating the unconscious in the interests of religion, as a process which we should introduce *only after we know where the truth lies*. Suggestion is not to do all the work of creating and supporting faith: the mind always has its "proofs" in reserve, and the suggestion only renders more effective a faith which already possesses the mind through the power of its own

[1] R. H. Thouless, *op. cit.* pp. 173 f.

[2] *Pensées* (Brunschvicg), iv. 252. I was pointed to this passage by J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 220.

truth. As for the cases where a spiritual director recommends the exercises of religion to a complete doubter as a way to faith, this may not really be with a view to working in a purely non-rational manner upon the subconscious, which is what suggestion means. It may rather (as we saw in an earlier chapter) be a policy of setting before his conscious mind the truth and reality of religion, in all its wonder and mystery, which cannot be conveyed in the prose of mere argument, but only through the symbols and solemnities of worship. And the doubter may accept the advice in the hope that, if there is any reality in religion, he may thus see it for himself and believe—not, indeed, by logical reasoning, but nevertheless by the power of the truth, upon faith's own valid grounds (which in these chapters we are endeavouring to discover). This may be what Venn called "putting oneself into favourable circumstances" for believing, but it certainly need not be to "dull the wits," as Pascal said; and whether it is wise advice to give to a doubter or not, it obviously might have the very opposite effect to that which is intended. Instead of successfully "suggesting" the beliefs in question, the religious practice might antipathetically convince the doubter of their falsity, or, at least, reveal to him his own unbelief. A striking illustration of this is found in the following confession of Tolstoy's, relating to the period when he had returned to faith in God, though still mystified by many doctrines of the Church. It forms an extraordinarily interesting commentary on Pascal's advice. "Though many things belonging to the faith of the people appeared strange to me, I accepted everything. I attended the Church services, prayed morning and evening, fasted, prepared for communion; and while doing all this, for the first time felt that my reason found nothing to object to. It was so necessary for me at that time to believe in order to live, that I unconsciously concealed from myself the contradictions and obscurities in the commonly received doctrines. . . . I shall never forget the painful feeling I experienced when I took the communion for the first time after many years. The service, the confession, the

prayers, all this was understood by me, and produced the glad conviction that the meaning of life lay open to me. The communion I explained to myself as an action done in remembrance of Christ, and as signifying a cleansing from sin and a complete acceptance of Christ's teaching. . . . But when I drew near to the altar, and the priest called upon me to repeat that I believed that what I was about to swallow was the real body and blood, I felt a sharp pain at the heart; it was no unconsidered word, it was the hard demand of one who could never have known what faith was. I humbled myself again. I swallowed the blood and the body without any mocking thoughts, in the wish to believe; but the shock had been given, and knowing what awaited me another time, I could never go again."[1] Here was the wish to believe, and here was the humble receptive use of religious ordinances. But they did not succeed in "suggesting" the desired belief: as soon as they went beyond the range of beliefs which the worshipper's faith had already accepted, they rather intensified his unbelief. The idea of auto-suggestion cannot help out the doctrine of the will-to-believe. Something more is required if we would understand what faith is. In fact, what looks like the will-to-believe is often really something deeper.

IV

In order to bring this out, let us pursue our inquiry as to what the wise treatment of a doubter would really be. What counsel would the wise counsellor give to a man in the modern world who professed himself perplexed by universal doubt regarding the truth of religion? Instead of simply arguing with the doubter and endeavouring to prove religion, or telling him to make up his mind to believe, by an effort of will, or even advising "religious practice," the wise counsellor would probably say something like this. "Underneath your doubt, don't you feel at least a basal kind of certainty about the meaning of your

[1] G. H. Perris, *The Life and Teaching of Leo Tolstoy*, pp. 81 f.

life in the universe? You may feel uncertain about all the dogmas of religion as you have been accustomed to conceive them. But, to go down to something much more simple and elemental, can't you find in the bottom of your heart an ineradicable conviction that the universe is not without a purpose of good, which makes it worth while for you even to face your doubts and play the man; that all is not blind chance, but that there is a meaning and principle of good at the heart of all things?" Now it is very important to note that in saying all this to your doubter, in such a persuasive and practical way, you are not appealing to his will, his choice, his voluntary agency, or to his wants and wishes as to what he shall believe. Nor are you practising suggestion in the proper sense. You are appealing to a conviction which you think he really has even underneath his doubts. And if you are successful, and he confesses to such a conviction, then you will tell him that he is not so entirely devoid of belief as he had miserably supposed; that this is already the beginning of faith, though it looks so different from the dogmas he had been doubting; and that this faith is enough to begin with, enough to live on for the time, until, through faithfulness to it, he finds it gradually growing into something more explicit. It may be no more than what R. L. Stevenson calls:

> "The half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
> That somehow the right is the right
> And the smooth shall bloom from the rough."

Stevenson cries out, "Lord, if that were enough?" and again, "God, if this were faith?"[1] Well, you would tell your doubter that it *is* enough to begin with; it *is* faith, though he does not realize it. And it is to this deep, fundamental, unrealized faith, and not merely to his will, that you make your appeal. Thus, when the doubter valiantly makes up his mind to believe, as James would have him do, he is not really so much *making up* his mind as *discovering* his deeper mind, falling back upon a basal conviction which had been obscured by doubts and difficulties, but which

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Songs of Travel*, xxv.

was really there all the time in an elemental form. If he *chooses*, he does so because of a fundamental conviction that the side of faith is the right side; which, *mutatis mutandis*, is very like what we saw the medieval doubter would have done with his less extensive doubts. "I cannot agree," writes Dr. L. P. Jacks, "with those philosophers who maintain that religion is based on the will-to-believe. The two are clearly connected, but it would be truer to say that the will-to-believe is based on religion."[1] It seems clear that this is the true analysis of what really happens, even when it appears on the surface to be a case of creating faith out of nothing by an effort of will.

A very illuminating illustration of this is provided by the self-revelations of that extraordinarily eager and honest soul, George Tyrrell. At one period of his life he wrote: "Sometimes I think it must be that, in the deepest depths of my self-consciousness, I believe nothing at all, and am self-deceived in the matter; and the recognition of the manner in which I have, all along, allowed the 'wish to believe' to play upon me, rather confirms this melancholy hypothesis."[2] This seems a clear self-confessed case of the attempt to create faith by the wish or the will to believe, and it is cited as such by Professor Pratt.[3] But it will appear in a different light if we turn to another passage (to which Professor Pratt does not refer) written by Tyrrell years later as he looked back with what we may presume to have been a riper judgment. "I used, till lately, to think that at this period I did not really 'believe' but rather wished to believe, and that all my subsequent endeavours were simply directed to the realization of that wish. Were the analysis right I should have to say that I do not believe now; for I am certainly as far as ever from a satisfactory synthesis or apologetic. But I am quite sure that I believe now, *and that I believed then.* For to recognize the value of religion, to live for it and work for it, is already to believe.

[1] L. P. Jacks, *Religious Perplexities*, p. 35.

[2] *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell* (ed. M. D. Petre), vol. i. p. 133.

[3] J. P. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 218.

What one works for is not belief; but a satisfying formulation and defence of belief." [1] If Tyrrell was at all correct in this later, retrospective judgment (and he, of all men, is very unlikely to have been over-indulgent in his self-analysis), we have here a surprisingly apt confirmation of the analysis upon which we ventured above. It was not really a pure case of working for belief or willing to believe, though even the doubter himself suspected at the time that it was. An element of positive belief was there already, urging on the doubter, though it had been almost choked by false formulations, or starved for want of a " satisfying formulation." And this is, perhaps, what always underlies the better sort of " will-to-believe." Not that we need pronounce every one who wishes or wills to believe a genuine believer. There may be all sorts of motives for the wish, and some of them may have little to do with real religion. But if we take the nobler kind of will-to-believe, which James and kindred spirits would commend, it turns out on analysis to be something more. It is not a mere blind act of will that the honest doubter falls back on, when his mind is invaded by negations, but a deeper conviction which has lain hidden in his heart, and without which there would not be a genuinely religious desire to believe at all. " To some measure in all of us," Tyrrell writes on the same page, " though most unequally, there is, or at least has been, this invitation of the heart, this persuasion of the Holy Spirit, to accept and live by the religious view of life. It is no blind act; but an act of higher, if dimmer, vision than that of Positivism."

To put the same thing in another way, the " venture of faith " is never a sheer blind venture. This phrase is

[1] *Autobiography and Life*, vol. ii. p. 275 (our italics). The fact that Tyrrell afterwards moved so far away from the position of the church of his adoption does not prove that, after all, he had never had more than a wish to believe, but simply that he had temporarily adopted a " formulation " of his belief which was not ultimately " satisfying " to him. He says: " If I became a Roman Catholic, it was because what I then understood of Catholicism (so different from what I now understand) seemed to me the form or formulation which best expressed what I wanted in wanting religion " (*ibid.* p. 276).

a very familiar and useful one, by no means exclusively associated with the doctrine of the will-to-believe,[1] but we must be careful about its interpretation. The venture of faith does not mean the determination to accept a belief without any grounds, nor the adoption of the " religious hypothesis " with a view to verification, nor the resolve to act as if this " hypothesis " were true, nor the courage which lives nobly without any sure beliefs at all. It means rather the adventure of living nobly in a world which can never give us direct proof of the triumph of good, living nobly in the light of a conviction which is not, indeed, uncertain so far as it goes, but which may be hard to grasp and articulate, which leaves us uncertain on many points, and which in any case is not demonstrable in the ordinary way. It is really the living and acting that can be called a venture, not the faith in itself. And this venture of faith can be called a venture, not because it acts without any assurance, on a mere chance, but because its assurance is a faith in the ultimate reality and triumph of good, and cannot give any guarantee as to the immediate outcome of any particular endeavour in this world. That is the sense in which every man of faith has " gone out, not knowing whither he went," to " look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," not sure of where it is to be found or what it is like, or perhaps of anything else about it that can be put into words, and yet sure at least in a dim and desperate way of its existence. The man who makes the venture may be uncertain of every " formulation," and yet (if it is really a " venture of faith " at all) he has an inward remnant of conviction, of belief, of trust, which is more certain than any expression or formulation of it.[2] A

[1] Cf. " a sally of faith, a venture of confidence in Goodness at the heart of the world." See H. E. Fosdick, *The Meaning of Faith*, p. 8.

[2] It is, perhaps, unnecessary to enter into the question whether religious faith claims *absolute certainty*. The affirmative is strongly maintained as vital by Karl Heim, *Glaubensgewissheit*, pp. 31 ff. Mr. F. C. S. Schiller says : " Perhaps, however, we may find that the theologians have exaggerated, and do not really need the stupendous certitudes of absolute truth to satisfy religious postulates : or, rather, that they have not sufficiently analysed the notion of certainty " (*Problems of Belief*, p. 21). We need

bold theologian of our day says: "Faith is not belief in spite of evidence, but life in scorn of consequence"; and one is inclined to feel that the definition which he gives is as defective as that which he rejects; until one comes to the next phrase, "a courageous trust in the great purpose of all things": [1] yes, that must be there in germ, or there can be no venture of faith at all, nor any help in the mere will-to-believe.[2]

V

It will help us finally to disentangle what is true from what is false in the doctrine of the will-to-believe, if we follow a step yet farther our inquiry as to the treatment of a doubter, suggested by James's essay. For it may be remarked that hitherto we have not been facing the question of extreme and utter doubt, but have been assuming that the doubter can be led to discover in his heart a latent and unrealized germ of religious conviction. But suppose that he cannot find in his heart any such remnant of conviction as to a meaning or purpose of good: suppose that to your leading question he sadly answers "No." It is certain that this is the answer which will sometimes, in all honesty and earnestness, be given. And what then? If you agree with James that it is hopeless to try to *prove* religious truths to him, is there anything left to which you can appeal, except the mere will-to-believe?

Yes, there is. You can tell him that at least he is sure of the difference between right and wrong, good and bad; and he will agree. He may not have any theory about it, he may even feel that this distinction is in a sense clouded for him by his religious doubt, and, of course, he may have

not analyse it here, or stop to ask whether any meaning can be attached to *absolute* certainty. The main thing is to avoid the fatal error of distinguishing religious faith from ordinary knowledge by making the former less certain. We must be at least as certain of our faith as we are of anything.

[1] Kirsopp Lake, *Landmarks in the History of Early Christianity*, p. 96.

[2] Cf. J. Oman: "Faith is not, as is often affirmed, trying to believe things on a venture, yet, only as we can do no other than venture, have we faith" (*Grace and Personality*, p. 193).

moral perplexities on particular points. But, as a matter of actual life and practice, he is not in doubt about this whole realm of things. It is indubitable. Surely it is on this point that James leaves himself most open to attack. He says: "The question of having moral beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will." [1] But here we cannot agree. It may be true that "moral scepticism can no more be refuted or proved by logic than intellectual scepticism can," and that many a man's moral convictions dwell only "in the inarticulate heart of him"; [1] but in actual life and practice every doubter worth considering knows that in some quite inescapable sense the noble is better than the base and has an absolute claim upon him. And this is what the spiritual counsellor would appeal to in the last resort. "Amid all your religious doubt, you are certain at least of the claims of duty and of your moral ideal. That must be right. Follow it, then, faithfully in the meanwhile. Such a clue, at least, cannot lead you astray, and it is likely to lead you to the truth if there is any truth at all to be found." Whatever further and more definite advice the counsellor might give in the modern world, he would surely make this central—this appeal to the doubter's moral convictions.

As we have, at point after point of this chapter, been illustrating by historical examples the treatment of doubt, we cannot do better than illustrate our present point by quoting the famous counsel of F. W. Robertson of Brighton, who had been through the painful experience himself. "There are hours," he said, "and they come to all of us at some period of life or other, when the hand of Mystery seems to lie heavy on the soul. . . . Then the man whose faith rested on outward Authority and not on inward life, will find it give way: the authority of the priest: the authority of the Church: or merely the authority of a document proved by miracles and backed by prophecy: the soul—conscious life hereafter—God—will be an awful desolate Perhaps. Well! in such moments you doubt all. . . . In such an hour what remains? I reply, Obedi-

[1] *The Will to Believe*, pp. 22 f.

ence. Leave those thoughts for the present. Act—be merciful and gentle—honest: force yourself to abound in little services: try to do good to others: be true to the duty that you know. *That* must be right whatever else is uncertain. And by all the laws of the human heart, by the word of God, you shall not be left to doubt. Do that much of the will of God which is plain to you, and 'You shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'" [1]

There is something unmistakably self-authenticating about that advice, arising out of the depths of a personal experience; and it takes us very near the heart of the whole matter. For one thing, it shows us the sense in which a man may have to *wait* for the coming of faith as a gift of God which he cannot achieve immediately at will. This idea of waiting is entirely foreign to the doctrine of the will-to-believe. "We *may* wait if we will," says James, "but if we do so, we do so at our peril as much as if we believed." [2] Well, there is, indeed, a sense in which it is unnecessary and perilous, and worse than perilous, for the doubter to wait—namely, as regards the moral life, the daily choice of clean and noble living. That lies plain and urgent before him, and so he need not and dare not sit down helpless in the blizzard,[3] though he knows not whither the path may lead. This distinction between the uncertainties of belief and the certainties of duty is a perfectly familiar and luminous one to the ordinary honest doubter.[4] He is sure enough about the daily practical choice. And so he can "carry on" and play the man. But for a sure and conscious faith, an equipment of religious belief, he has to wait. He cannot force it, and Robertson actually counsels him (whether wisely or not, at this point) to put these thoughts aside for the time, and concentrate on the noble life, in the hope that it will bring assurance as to the truth of religion. Faith is, in the words of the Quaker

[1] *Sermons*, by the Rev. Frederick W. Robertson (2nd series).

[2] *The Will to Believe*, p. 30.

[3] This is the simile borrowed by James in his essay from Fitz-James Stephen.

[4] See the illustrations from Starbuck's material in the next chapter.

Penington, "a gift to be waited for and obtained from God." [1] When it comes to a man, though it has arisen out of his "doing the will" of God, yet somehow it comes as a gift, at which the seeker can only wonder, because he has not wrought it himself, and if he has found it at last, it has also found him.

It seems clear that the authentic voice of religion has always spoken of faith in this twofold way, as a thing that depends on ourselves, and yet does not depend altogether on ourselves in the sense of being consciously chosen. On the one hand, faith is a thing that we *ought* to have, and that a man may at least sometimes be justly reproached for not having (as Jesus used to reproach His contemporaries), on the presupposition that, if a man never comes to have any faith at all, there is something wrong with the man which he could and should have put right. And yet, on the other hand, faith is not a thing to which, even with the best intentions, the honest doubter can always clearly attain in a moment. Perhaps, indeed, he may never very clearly and consciously attain to it at all, or at least never in any very articulate form. And if and when he does, it is not altogether as an achievement, but as an "experience," a revelation, a gift of God which has gradually or suddenly come to him while he "waited for God" in the path of duty and love. Now it is for this side of the matter that there does not seem to be any room in James's doctrine, which makes faith an achievement of the human will, like the voluntary choices of the moral life. Of course, it may be said that to the religious man even these moral choices have this twofold aspect: they are to him not only his own doing, but also in a deep sense the work of God's grace; and why cannot the same be true of a "voluntarily adopted faith"? Well, it is indeed true that the religious man looks upon even his moral victories as gifts of God; and it was not a mere anti-Pelagian revulsion that made St. Augustine pray regarding his moral struggle, "Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt." [2] But

[1] Quoted by Edward Grubb, *Authority and the Light Within*, p. 82.
[2] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, bk. x. ch. xxix.

would even this be conceivable, this humility which faith brings into our moral lives, this consciousness of utter dependence, if we regarded faith itself as a voluntary act? For then faith could not be regarded as leading us, by ways that we knew not, to some ultimate Source of all our seeking. It would not then be a matter of finding, or being found by, an absolute divine truth and reality which drew us and had all along been drawing us like a magnet. It would be rather a matter of helping to create, or contributing towards, a growing truth and divinity by our own wills. Such a general Pragmatistic or Humanistic philosophy is the true logical setting, as James and Schiller well knew, of the doctrine of the will-to-believe. It is, of course, impossible in this place to discuss that whole philosophical issue.[1] But it is sufficient for us to point out that this doctrine really leaves no room for that element in the testimony of the saints which tells us that in religion "all is of God." "God is not a product, but the author and living principle, of the will-to-believe," says Principal Jacks;[2] and that seems true; but, of course, it breaks up James's doctrine of the will-to-believe altogether. Mr. Schiller tells us: "The doctrine that our beliefs are wholly forced upon us by external necessity is wholly false, and not quite honest";[3] and that may be true of much believing. But as regards genuine religious faith, there is surely more depth in what Baron von Hügel tells us: "What constitutes religion is not simply to hold a view and to try to live a life, with respect to the Unseen and the Deity, as possibly or even certainly beautiful or true or good: but precisely that which is over and above this—the holding this view and this life to proceed somehow from God Himself, so as to bind my innermost mind and conscience to unhesitating assent. Not simply that I think it, but that, in addition, I feel bound to think it,

[1] For an admirable criticism of the whole philosophical outlook involved in the doctrine of the will-to-believe, see ch. xii. on "The Will as a Maker of Truth" in Professor W. E. Hocking's *The Meaning of God in Human Experience.*

[2] L. P. Jacks, *op. cit.* p. 35. [3] *Op. cit.* p. 112.

transforms a thought about God into a religious act." [1] Therefore we cannot consider that the doctrine of the will-to-believe gives us a satisfying account of faith.

Yet, on the other hand, we must not overlook the very important lesson which the doctrine has taught us as a contribution to our present investigation—the lesson that faith has a close connexion with the will, with the moral life. Perhaps we might say that the error of this doctrine of the will-to-believe lies in forgetting the truth we learned in our last chapter—that faith is an "experience"; [2] while the merit of this doctrine is to correct the error exposed in our last chapter—the error of thinking that such an experience can be a purely *given* thing, without any activity of the mind or the will. Faith at least, we have now learned, is not an experience which arises *in vacuo* and unconditioned: it has a close connexion with the will, because with the moral life. But for the development of this idea we shall have to wait for another chapter.

[1] Baron Friedrich von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, vol. i. p. 46. Cf. the following by Professor W. E. Hocking: "There can be no valid worship except that in which man is involuntarily bent by the presence of the Most Real, beyond his will" (*op. cit.* p. 152).

[2] Professor Hocking says that in the demand which our moral will makes for a God "we may discern beside the stroke of will an experience of discovery. If there is any knowledge of God, it must be in some such way a matter of experience" (*op. cit.* p. 154).

CHAPTER V

FAITH AND MORAL CONVICTION

SYNOPSIS

THIS chapter attempts to reach a positive answer to our question.

I. The nineteenth century was a crucial age for the understanding of faith's true basis, because under pressure of doubt faith then found itself driven back upon its ultimate defences. And in that period one seeker after another made the discovery that *the way out of doubt to faith is by the moral consciousness.* This is illustrated from F. W. Robertson, Tennyson, and Browning.

II. If we desire more recent and varied confirmation of this discovery, we may find it in Starbuck's psychological collections, but more significantly in the words of such spiritual seekers as Tolstoy, Tyrrell, Clutton-Brock and Middleton Murry, whose testimony is at our present stage more useful than the arguments of exact philosophers.

III. This discovery seems to point us to the view which has been emerging in our own argument: that when we take our moral convictions seriously, they are found to carry with them a religious conviction *that goodness is at the heart of the universe, or that our ideals are laid upon us by One in whom they are somehow realized.* This is the germ of faith in God, the "grain of mustard-seed" out of which all true religious belief grows.

IV. What is the precise nature of this argument from moral conviction to religious faith? (1) We must be quite clear that it is *not* a matter of arguing from the existence in man of a unique faculty called Conscience to the existence of a supernatural Author who could have implanted it (a piece of hopelessly antiquated psychology. Cf. the Rashdall-M'Dougall controversy: "Is Conscience an Emotion?"), but rather a matter of hearkening to the *utterances* of Conscience (as every psychologist must do, whatever his theories as to its genesis), and so coming to detect in it the voice of God. (2) But how, precisely? Not simply (as Kant held) by means of a *moral postulate,* but in a much more direct way, as part of the very *meaning* of the moral consciousness. Either our moral values tell us something about the nature and purpose of reality, *i.e.* give us the germ of religious belief, or they tell us nothing at all. Thus "mere morality" is an abortion: *if morality means anything, it ultimately means —God.* (Controversy here with Bertrand Russell.) (3) In this connexion, "moral" is not to be taken in the narrow sense, for morality covers the whole of life, and thus embraces *truth and beauty* as well as *goodness*; and our argument is that when the moral consciousness is taken in earnest it passes into a religious conviction that *these values are the shadowings of a perfect divine Reality which is beyond our imagination, but which is all our heart's desire.* This is faith in God.

V. But are there not many morally earnest men who never attain to a belief in God? Yes; and yet such good men (as is widely recognized in modern literature) have surely an *unconscious faith,* which they are prevented from realizing, through intellectual misunderstandings. They have in their hearts that *elemental faith in the Divine* which expresses itself but partially in their moral consciousness. This is the real "religious *a priori,*" the seed which, fed upon the experience of life, the fellowship and worship of the Church, the tradition of the saints, grows into the great tree of religious belief.

CHAPTER V

Faith and Moral Conviction

I

Towards the end of the foregoing chapter we were considering the advice given to religious doubters by Frederick Robertson of Brighton, and we must now follow the clue which we then found, in the hope of reaching a satisfactory answer to our question as to the foundation of faith. The passage quoted is from his famous sermon, "Obedience the Organ of Spiritual Knowledge," preached in 1851, from the text, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." [1] The sermon works out in a highly original manner the idea of religious belief as based neither on authority (whether of Church or of Bible) nor on "a cultivated understanding" (which he called "the root principle of Rationalism"), but on a habit of obedience to the laws of duty and love, which even the doubter cannot doubt. To many a seeker after God this sermon in its published form has been a veritable revelation; and when first preached, in the middle of the nineteenth century, it was indeed the revelation of a new truth such as few counsellors could have offered to a doubter. The discovery was made by Robertson for himself in the bitter experience of complete religious doubt. The crisis took place during an extended tour which he made on the Continent in 1846, and in a letter written from Heidelberg in the very midst of it he lets us see his mind moving. "I have got so far as this. Moral goodness and moral beauty are realities, lying at the basis, and beneath all forms of the best religious ex-

[1] John 7^{17}. *Sermons* (2nd series), by the Rev. Frederick W. Robertson.

pressions." [1] It was through taking his stand on these indubitable realities that he came to find himself again in possession of religious faith. Speaking to working men in Brighton afterwards of the agony of doubt, he said: "I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless: it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand simple landmarks of morality. . . . Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. . . . Thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear, bright day." [2] Thus Robertson made for himself, and apparently almost unaided, a very practical discovery regarding the nature of "spiritual knowledge" or religious faith, and one which perhaps points us to the position upon which the lines of our own argument have been converging. He discovered that faith is somehow based on moral realities, so that the more loyal a man is to these realities, the more he comes to be convinced of religious reality too.

But Robertson was not the only one who was making the discovery at that time. Indeed, this seems to be one of the most characteristic products of the nineteenth century, which was so sorely perplexed about matters of faith. It is probably true to say that in the nineteenth century the experience of religious doubt became more widespread among good people than it had ever been before in Christendom. If the eighteenth century was the age of rationalism and scepticism, the nineteenth was the age in which, with the enormous progress of natural science and historical criticism, doubt became natural for ordinary thinking people of religious sympathies. Professor Pringle-Pattison points out how characteristic of this period is "the protest of the heart against the reason." [3] Many people felt the intellectual strain upon their faith, and so this may be

[1] *Life and Letters of the Rev. Frederick W. Robertson*, by Stopford A. Brooke, vol. i. p. 121.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 112.

[3] *The Idea of God*, pp. 46 ff.

regarded as a kind of crucial age for the understanding of faith's true basis. Faith was then forced more than ever to reflect upon its own nature and evidence, and could therefore be seen arising in its own strength and standing on its own feet in isolation from its pristine props of authority and tradition. And it is highly instructive to find one religious soul after another in that crucial age making the discovery which Robertson had made—that faith is somehow a conviction arising out of the moral consciousness.

The most obvious example is to be found in Tennyson, who was passing through the struggle in precisely the same years as Robertson, and who made the discovery in a very similar form, as *In Memoriam* shows us. To Tennyson religious faith was essentially a matter of trusting that the universe is ruled by a purpose of good, "That nothing walks with aimless feet," "That somehow good Will be the final goal of ill," and "every winter change to spring." And Tennyson also made the discovery that in the conflict of "Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt," it is the moral consciousness which can lead us to a settlement. It is to the pure and loyal heart that faith comes. He wrote about his friend: "Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds, At last he beat his music out," and "thus he came at length To find a stronger faith his own." He had discovered, like Robertson, that the music of religious faith somehow arises in the heart which is faithful to the paths of purity and duty. The same discovery was made in his own way by Robert Browning. A recent historical writer has remarked that "at a time when the official leaders of the Church were conducting so unskilfully their disastrous controversy with the scientists, one of the greatest influences keeping thoughtful and earnest people true to the Christian faith was the poetry of Browning."[1] With Browning also it was a case of actual struggle with doubt in his own experience; and Sir Henry Jones tells us that "the most interesting feature of Browning's proof of his optimistic faith is his appeal from the intelligence to the moral con-

[1] D. C. Somervell, *A Short History of our Religion*, p. 289.

sciousness." [1] It is precisely the same discovery again, though with a different set of words. If Robertson's favourite word for the expression of the moral consciousness was "duty," and Tennyson's perhaps "purity," Browning most naturally spoke of "love." To him faith was essentially the conviction that the universe "means intensely and means good," [2] but, above all, that it means love, that "the All-Great" is "the All-Loving too." And it is not through knowledge but through love of our fellow-creatures that we can rise to that conviction of the reality of divine love. Such was Browning's discovery. "Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—so wilt Thou." [3] "So let us say—not 'Since we know, we love,' But rather 'Since we love, we know enough.'" [4]

It would not be difficult to illustrate further from the literature of that period this characteristic discovery as to what faith is and how it comes; but it is unnecessary. Nor need we refer at present to the more philosophical expressions of these ideas, nor discuss how far men like Robertson, Tennyson, and Browning were influenced by the work of Kant and his successors, consciously or unconsciously, in making their discovery. We shall soon have to make a philosophical examination of these ideas for ourselves; but our present interest has been to see how, in an age which seems to provide the crucial instance, one doubter after another found himself driven back upon his moral convictions, and took his stand upon these as the indubitable foundations upon which his faith must be built. An earlier chapter has made it plain that we shall gladly accept Professor Pringle-Pattison's warning against the danger, which the nineteenth century did not escape, of damaging the argument by over-emphasizing the dualism between "the heart" and "the reason." But this need

[1] Sir Henry Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, popular edition, p. 274. I have been largely helped by this book in the quotations from Browning which follow.

[2] *Fra Lippo Lippi.* [3] *Saul.*

[4] *A Pillar at Sebzevar.*

not blind us to the significance of the discovery which those seekers made. It was a case of faith being driven back by intellectual difficulties upon its own last defences, and thus discovering what these defences actually are—the certainties of the moral consciousness. These a man could not doubt, in actual life; and these, taken seriously and faithfully, carried with them a religious faith in goodness at the heart of the universe.

May it not be that we have here the essential "grain of mustard-seed" for which we are seeking, and out of which all faith grows?

II

It may occur to the reader that we have drawn our illustrations from a very narrow range. We have quoted poet and preacher, but it has all been from Mid-Victorian England, which may seem to have been quite peculiarly open to the error of over-emphasizing the moral aspect of life. That age may indeed have been a crucial one in this particular matter of faith, but perhaps there was too much panic for steady thinking, and it all sounds rather an old story now. Can it be maintained that, amid the changing needs of subsequent generations, the discovery has proved a vital one, and that faith has continued to place its back against the same rock?

If we value the kind of evidence collected through questionnaires by empirical psychologists, we shall find some interesting material for our purpose in Professor Starbuck's collections, made in America in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Here again we can study the rise of faith in the cases of people who have passed through a period of complete religious doubt, and it is not unlike what we have seen in the great Victorians. "During storm and stress and doubt," says Starbuck, "that which remained firmest when life was least organized was this same [ethical] instinct." A woman wrote: "In case of the absence of a belief in God, I would still live by a categorical imperative." Another wrote: "Life would be meaningless to me without a belief in God, but without

it I would still continue to do my duty." [1] A man wrote: "I went through a rational stage at seventeen or eighteen, when the sense of duty only was left." Another wrote: "I was in spiritual agony; my spirit was smitten with such a darkness that only one of all the early faiths remained. *It must be right to do right.*" [2] As regards the way out of doubt to faith, Starbuck found that at least one clearly marked way was that of "following up the thread of duty," and he quotes several examples. One man wrote: "Have doubted everything but a mother's love, and the existence of my poor self. My doubts have somehow been resolved in the stress of trying to live uprightly. I could not carry doubts far while trying to be a good son, student, husband, father and citizen." [3] Another wrote: "I was led straight back to religion through the moral instincts." [4] There is not much clear thinking in these utterances, but most of the writers at least were ordinary people, without any axe to grind, and perhaps without much knowledge of what had been written by greater minds on these subjects; and thus we see the discovery which great Mid-Victorians had made in England being repeated by obscure seekers in America at the end of the century.[5]

From the evidence of questionnaires, however, we shall turn to what seems a more illuminating kind of illustration. It appears that during the last half-century a wide variety of religious seekers who have communicated their confessions of faith to the world may be seen making the same discovery in one form or another, and even announcing it as if it had never been made before. Again we shall pass over the more definitely philosophical literature, and listen to men who can rather be recognized as great pilgrims of truth and seekers after God: and if they belong to traditions which differ widely from each other and from those

[1] E. D. Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, pp. 321 f.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 270. [3] *Ibid.* p. 265. [4] *Ibid.* p. 287.
[5] Starbuck found that in the period of doubt the three lines that remain and that lead people back to religion are those of the intellectual, æsthetic, and ethical interests. We shall have to discuss at a later point how far it is true to say that faith is based upon all these values rather than on moral values alone.

of the voices to which we have already been listening, they will be the more significant.

We may begin with Tolstoy. There are few more convincing things in imaginative literature than the account in *Anna Karenin* of how the hero Levin, after long doubt, came to a clear faith in God. It was brought about in a moment by a few simple words uttered by a peasant about the difference between one man who was merciless to his debtors in their difficulties and another who was merciful.

> "'One man lives for his own wants and nothing else, like Mituh; he only thinks of filling his belly, but Fokanitch is a righteous man. He lives for his soul. He does not forget God.'
>
> "'How thinks of God? How does he live for his soul?' Levin almost shouted.
>
> "'Why, to be sure, in truth, in God's way. Folks are different. Take you now, you wouldn't wrong a man. . . .'
>
> "'Yes, yes, good-bye,' said Levin, breathless with excitement. . . . The words uttered by the peasant had acted on his soul like an electric shock. . . . He was aware of something new in his soul, and joyfully tested this new thing, not yet knowing what it was. 'Not living for his own wants, but for God? For what God? And could one say anything more senseless than what he said? He said that one must not live for one's own wants, that is, that one must not live for what we understand, what we are attracted by, what we desire, but must live for something incomprehensible, for God, whom no one can understand nor even define. What of it? Didn't I understand those senseless words of Fyodor's? . . . I understood them more fully and clearly than I understand anything in life, and never in my life have I doubted nor can I doubt about it. . . . And I and millions of men, men who lived ages ago and men living now—peasants, the poor in spirit, and the learned who have thought and written about it, in their obscure words saying the same thing—we are all agreed about this one thing: what we must live for and what is good. . . . Goodness is outside the chain of cause and effect. And yet I know it, and we all know it. What could be a greater miracle than that? Can I

> have found the solution of it all? Can my sufferings be over? . . . What is it makes me glad? What have I discovered? I have discovered nothing. I have only found out what I knew. I understand the force that in the past gave me life, and now too gives me life. I have been set free from falsity. I have found the Master.' . . . He had lived (without being aware of it) on those spiritual truths that he had sucked in with his mother's milk. . . . 'What should I have been, and how should I have spent my life, if I had not had these beliefs, if I had not known that I must live for God and not for my own desires? I should have robbed and lied and killed. Nothing of what makes the chief happiness of my life would have existed for me. . . . I looked for an answer to my question. And thought could not give an answer to my question—it is incommensurable with my question. The answer has been given me by life itself, in my knowledge of what is right and wrong. And that knowledge I did not arrive at in any way, it was given to me as to all men, *given*, because I could not have got it from anywhere.' . . . 'Can this be faith?' he thought, afraid to believe in his happiness. 'My God, I thank thee!' he said, gulping down his sobs, and with both hands brushing away the tears that filled his eyes." [1]

There are, indeed, in this passage of the novel certain references to "the deceitfulness of intellect" and the "irrationality" of our moral and religious convictions, which remind us of the error which we found in Mid-Victorian England. But the passage as a whole will be recognized as a marvellously living description of how an earnest man's moral convictions suddenly blossomed out into religious faith. If they meant anything, they meant God; and that was faith. Tolstoy was, of course, writing out of the depths of his own personal experience.

Our next illustration of this approach to faith will be from the pen of George Tyrrell, whose experience we have

[1] *Anna Karenin*, trans. Constance Garnett, vol. ii. pp. 400–7 (condensed). This is the novel which Matthew Arnold called "a piece of life." The Levin of the novel stood, of course, in many respects for Tolstoy himself.

already found illuminating at an earlier point of our argument. His witness in this matter is the more valuable because his natural bent was not moralistic but mystical: his friend Baron von Hügel spoke of him as "that born mystic." [1] The passages we shall quote doubtless betray (as does so much of Tyrrell's work) the influence of Newman, who in this matter was not far from his fellow-Victorians of other schools.[2] But Tyrrell was so desperate a doubter and so genuine a seeker that what he has to say about the ultimate basis of faith must be taken as indicating the bedrock which he had found for himself in his own spiritual struggle.

> "Faith is the foundation of the whole spiritual life. . . . This rock of irresistible reality is Conscience —the sense of the right, and of its absolute claims. No analysis, no explaining away, can permanently destroy this faith or lay this ghost. . . . Yet faith it is, and not understanding or inference, nor experience in the narrow external sense. And it is faith *in God*."
>
> "Faith in that directive power which my understanding figures to me, now as Conscience or as my Conscience, now as God or as my God, is for me the one immutable foundation-stone of the life of religion; or it is the germ, the nucleus, of which every fruitful growth of that life must be the legitimate and natural expression."
>
> "It is faith, then, faith in Conscience, in God, in the Right, that puts me in touch with reality, and delivers me from that sense of vacuity and *ennui* that mere understanding rather fosters than mitigates." [3]

To these so personal and significant words we can add this deliverance which we find in his greatest work:

> "True spiritual religion is a development, not of magical religion, but of the moral life." [4]

Our next witness will be that fine spirit of our time, the late Arthur Clutton-Brock, who makes a remarkably

[1] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (2nd ed.), vol. i. p. vii.
[2] See *Grammar of Assent*, especially ch. v.
[3] George Tyrrell, *Essays on Faith and Immortality*, ch. i.
[4] *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 128.

similar approach to faith. His fundamental idea, which found very rich and full expression, was that religious faith rests on the perception and acceptance of absolute values ; and (like Browning) he regarded absolute value as summed up, above all, in the word " Love."

> " The essence of Christ's teaching, that which makes it religious, is that we are to listen for the voice of God, not in signs and wonders, but in our own hearts. Wherever we are aware of absolute value, of a value that satisfies us utterly and one in which we forget ourselves, there we hear the voice of God. If we act upon that value, we shall attain to truth ; and if we act upon that truth, we shall attain to further truth, and so to further right action ; and we shall become more and more certain of the voice of God speaking to us through the answer we make to Him. . . . But Christ also tells us what it is we value most absolutely. When he speaks of love he is speaking of absolute value. Love is absolute value. . . . So all theological statements are but attempts to give a scientific expression to that which cannot be scientifically expressed, if they pretend to be more than prophecies and promises of the belief that may be attained to through right living. . . . When Christ tells us that God is love, he tells us also that we can know God only through our own love, that, when we love, we are making answer to the God who is love ; and that answer is the only means by which we can become aware of Him."

Again he speaks of—

> " faith in the values of man in spite of all appearances, a faith which, as it grows stronger, becomes a belief that these values are the answer of man's heart to something, to some one, that is not himself, and yet is like himself in the love of righteousness, truth and beauty."
>
> " In the most utter darkness of scepticism a man who still loves is not without hope. He may think he knows nothing about the nature of the universe ; and external reality may seem to him utterly alien from all his own values. Yet he knows that his values are in him and that they cannot be destroyed by the indifference of external reality. . . . That is

the furthest scepticism of those who love enough to trust in love." [1]

Clutton-Brock was a very modern spirit, and yet how strangely the above confession reminds us of the discovery which Frederick Robertson was making in 1846, as communicated in that letter from Heidelberg!

It will be worth while to take, as our last witness at this point, another typically modern spirit, Mr. Middleton Murry, a lonely and adventurous seeker, whose convictions have evidently been won by an independent spiritual struggle and are presented to the world with a kind of desperate sincerity. Mr. Murry will by many be regarded as a highly wayward guide in matters of faith, and, indeed, he is averse from the word "faith" altogether, and prefers to speak of "knowledge" in this connexion.[2] But these things only make it more significant to find him coming to rest in a position essentially identical with that which we have been illustrating, and using the language of theologians almost against his will.

> "Though our consciousness of the freedom of our soul remains unimpaired, there are certain things we cannot do; and these certain things are not such as are forbidden by the nature of the external world, wherein we freely admit necessity, but such as within ourselves we feel at the same moment that we are free to do and bound not to do, or free not to do and bound to do. In theological language, we are confronted with the mystery of conscience; but the word 'conscience,' worn thin, like most theological terms, by centuries of disputation and casuistry, will no longer hold what it must contain. The immediate experience to which, in the language of Christian psychology, the word 'conscience' corresponds is in itself as much positive as negative. The 'Thou shalt' is, at least, as frequent as the 'Thou shalt not.'
>
> "What we feel in ourselves is this. In the heart of an essential freedom which is ours, which we have

[1] A. Clutton-Brock, *Studies in Christianity*, pp. 14–30 and 48 f.

[2] "The religious man lives, or tries to live, not by faith, but by knowledge. . . . If you desire to call his knowledge faith, you may; but it is better not to" (J. Middleton Murry, *To the Unknown God*, p. 57; cf. p. 304).

> called the freedom of the soul, there is a sense of inner obligation to obey the command of something deeper than even the soul itself. . . . Here we touch the very quick of being, the secret core where self passes into not-self and is born as self once more ; this and none other is the meeting-place of the soul and God, the moment of contact and fusion between the I AM that is within and the I AM that is beyond —beyond, because we know it as exceeding the soul's capacity, and apprehend it immediately as infinite. . . . The sense of this inward motion, the consciousness of this binding relation between the two I AM's, is what I understand by the word 'religion.'" [1]

It is deeply interesting to note that, like Clutton-Brock, Mr. Murry finds these ideas contained, above all, in the sayings of Christ, and also that Tolstoy is one of his spiritual heroes. One cannot but feel that if he had a wider acquaintance with theological and philosophical literature he would realize more than he does how often all these things have been said before. But it is all the more significant for our present purpose to find him discovering them for himself. Like so many others in the modern world, he apparently discovered in his need that religious conviction comes somehow through the sense of absolute values, through the categorical imperative, through "Conscience."

III

These citations from such diverse quarters afford impressive evidence of the view of the foundation of faith upon which the modern world seems to be continually driven back in its religious quest ; and many more examples might be given by anyone with wide reading. It will, perhaps, occur to the student that the main ideas of these passages are almost commonplaces among thinking people, and that we might have quoted much more illuminating and precise expressions of them from the more definitely philosophical and theological literature of our age. The

[1] J. Middleton Murry, *op. cit.* pp. 161–3.

emphasis upon *value* as the clue to reality has especially become familiar in the philosophy of the modern world, and it is coming to be pretty generally recognized that the whole philosophical argument for theism, or for an idealistic view of the world, rests in the last resort upon the objectivity, or absoluteness, of our highest values. But citations from the literature of academic philosophy or theology would not have served our purpose so well, since it might be complained that we were exhibiting the philosophical proof of theism rather than the actual standing-ground of the religious man's belief, and thus were throwing no light upon the nature of faith. The complaint would indeed be somewhat illogical; for if the religious man has valid grounds for believing in God (and who else could have them?), it is these that the theistic philosopher must wish to explicate, and if he relies on quite other proofs, the "God" at whom he will arrive will not be the God of religion. Ultimately, it must be on the same grounds that a seeker comes to believe in God in his religious quest and a philosopher bases a belief in God in his theistic system—if his system is to have any real right to speak of God at all. We shall soon have to launch out for a little upon these waters of modern philosophical thought. But up to the present point it has been more useful to quote from writers who were rather spiritual seekers than technical philosophers; writers who, with perhaps careless philosophical expression, but with something of the note of a *confessio fidei*, were writing about faith's own argument as they had found it in their hearts; and who, moreover, were such intellectual free-lances that they could not be suspected of harbouring the prejudices of any narrow theological tradition. And we have found them agreeing remarkably in the discovery that the ultimate rock against which faith places its back is to be found in the indubitable convictions of the moral consciousness.

Let us then endeavour to sum up, for further examination, this view of the nature and basis of faith, which we have found emerging so significantly amid the religious doubts

of the modern world, and which seems identical with that towards which our own argument has been converging through the last three chapters. Religious faith is essentially the conviction that our highest values must and do count in the whole scheme of things, that they are not simply our little dream, but reveal the very meaning and purpose of the universe, that love is at the heart of all things ; that (to use Charles Secrétan's phrase which William James adopted) " perfection is eternal " ; that the world " means intensely and means good " ; that our highest values " are the answer of man's heart to something, to some one, that is not himself, and yet is like himself in the love of righteousness, truth, and beauty." This is the conviction which, when worked out and lived out, becomes faith in God. It is for this fundamental conviction that every sincere doubter is really struggling in the last resort, and it is out of this germinal conviction that the whole rich harvest of religious belief grows : the conviction that our ideals of love and duty have the very Purpose and Will of the universe behind them, and are laid upon us by One in whom somehow they are perfectly realized—are indeed but the shadowings of a Divine Reality which is beyond our imagining, but which is all our heart's Desire. These are vague expressions, but at the present point we must be content with them. And whence comes this conviction ? On what is it based ? Not on any demonstration that the universe is being thus governed, but rather on the assurance, given us through our moral consciousness, that it must be so. However deep we may go into " the valley of the shadow of the negative," we still have our moral convictions, that certain things are laid upon us by a noble necessity. We may not have any theory about it, but in actual practice we cannot doubt it. Now, the truer we are in practice to these moral convictions, these highest values, the more firmly do we come to grasp them, and the more deeply do we come to understand them ; for in these matters it is not by mere theoretical thinking, but by practical fidelity, that the deepest understanding comes. And the more deeply we thus come to understand them, the more do we become assured

that they mean something more than "mere morality": they are revelations of a divine Purpose. Thus "Conscience" begins to sound as the voice of God. Our moral conviction turns into a religious conviction, that the ideal is somehow real, that the goodness after which we strive is but the reflection of an infinite Goodness, and that Love is at the heart of all things. This is the germ of faith in God. This is the kernel that is at the heart of all religious belief, the essential "grain of mustard-seed," without which there can be no genuine religious believing at all, but which, in itself, when it is actually present, can move mountains of intellectual difficulties. This is the seed out of which, through countless ages of religious experience, worship, and fellowship, the whole rich organism of religious belief has grown, and out of which, fed on these long traditions, it can still grow in the heart of the individual. This is the faith which Jesus used to *blame* people for not having, and which even the simplest souls can have with a perfectly valid assurance for themselves, because it depends so much upon sincerity of will. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

IV

We must now examine more closely this argument (if such it should be called) from moral conviction to religious faith, from value to reality, from Conscience to God; and especially we must endeavour to rescue it from mis-statements, and so present it, if we can, in a form which will be neither logically precarious nor religiously unsatisfying.

(1) It is highly important to observe that this argument of faith is not a matter of deducing the existence of God, as a kind of psychological explanation, from the fact of the existence of a faculty called "Conscience" in man, "a faculty of a unique order which we can only believe to have been implanted in the human soul by a special divine act, and from whose special nature and position in the soul we can justifiably argue to the existence of a Moral Ruler of

the Universe." [1] If we were resting our position on such an argument, we might well be accused of working with utterly antiquated ideas which could not stand the light of the most elementary modern psychology. In such an argument, of course, even if it were valid, there would obviously be nothing that could be called faith : it would be simply an argument from effect to cause, a piece of quasi-psychological explanation by a theological hypothesis. But it would be a hopelessly antiquated and useless argument, immeasurably more precarious even than the psychological argument, which we criticized, from the facts of religious experience to the existence of their divine cause. For Conscience is not (we are all now agreed) a separate and mysterious faculty in the individual, giving clear and uniform utterances out of its own unaided resources, and requiring a supernatural cause for its explanation, but a gradual result of social evolution, largely conditioned in its utterances by social tradition and environment. The argument of faith, however, towards which we have been working, has nothing to do with this, and does not depend on any psychological view of the genesis of Conscience. Some years ago a controversy was carried on between Dr. William McDougall and the late Hastings Rashdall on the question, " Is Conscience an emotion ? ", the main interest being that, if it is, the argument from Conscience to God, which had been employed by Rashdall, goes by the board.[2] If Conscience is simply a matter of emotion, due to social factors, then its existence in man cannot be used to establish any theological conclusions. It is unfortunate that the moral argument for theism should ever have been thus connected with a question of genetic psychology, especially as Dr. McDougall denied that he had ever pronounced Conscience to be merely an emotion. But Rashdall made it clear that the real question is not how Conscience has

[1] Words used by Professor Wm. McDougall in description of an antiquated view of Conscience, *Hibbert Journal*, xix. 282.

[2] See Rashdall's volume, *Is Conscience an Emotion?* (1914), and articles by Rashdall and McDougall in the *Hibbert Journal* for January and April 1921, vol. xix.

developed, but whether its utterances have objective validity, and whether this can be given any meaning apart from the idea of God. "Without objectivity," said Eduard von Hartmann, "ethic has no meaning";[1] which seems obvious. And the further argument (if such it should be called) of religious faith is that without God, objectivity in ethics has no meaning. Our moral convictions, our absolute values, the utterances of our Conscience, which remain indubitable to us in actual life, even through the darkest periods of religious doubt, cannot in the last analysis be given a meaning without the introduction of the idea of God. The earnest man, whatever his psychological views may be, is quite sure of certain things in his own practical moral life. He hears the voice of Conscience, and, quite apart from any psychological theory about it, he is quite sure of its authority. Only with such a man can this subject be discussed at all. But such a man, whether he realizes it or not, believes something which involves not only duty but God, not only morality but religion; and the more he understands this voice of Conscience (as he may hope to do, not so much by thinking it out as by living it out), the more will he hear in it the voice of God, and perceive that it really means a religious view of the world.

If this is the argument of faith, it is obviously secure against the reproach of being based on an antiquated psychology of Conscience: for it has nothing to do with psychology, but bases itself on a rock of moral conviction which is common to all psychologists. Every thinker worth considering, whatever his psychological views may be, is surer of his fundamental moral convictions than of any of the conclusions of his psychology. An interesting illustration of this is involuntarily provided by the great psychologist, C. G. Jung, of Zurich. Jung apparently does not believe in the existence of God at all, and would undoubtedly disallow the argument from Conscience as inconsistent with an enlightened modern psychology. Yet at the beginning of his most important psychological

[1] Quoted by Rashdall.

treatise, in which he explains away the objective reality of the religious realm, he places a quotation, as a kind of motto, which makes moral obligation more certain and fundamental than any psychological conclusions. " It is therefore a moral duty for the man of science to expose himself to the risk of committing error and to submit to criticism, in order that science may continue to progress." [1] He is sure of this fact of *moral duty*, or at least surer of it than of anything else, surer of it than of his psychological views ; for these may be wrong, but the moral duty of seeking truth remains fundamental. If, then, he is sure of this, what does he mean by it ? What is meant by the words, " This is my duty " ? They obviously do not mean simply, " I prefer to do this," or " There is in me an instinct which impels me to do this," for these would be merely statements of an unimportant psychological fact regarding an individual, providing a datum for the psychologist. There would be no reason for solemnly setting down such a statement as a motto at the beginning of a psychological treatise. These words about the moral duty of the scientist obviously mean an objective obligation. And the further question is whether any clear and full meaning can be put into this, apart from a view of the universe which involves the idea of God. If it can be shown to involve, upon a deeper understanding, the idea of God, if moral conviction can be shown thus to carry with it the germ of religious faith, such an argument of faith would be quite secure against the charge of resting on an antiquated psychology ; for it would not rest on any psychology at all, but on something much more fundamental and unquestionable. However Conscience may have grown, we do believe in its voice. This may, indeed, lead us to reject certain theories of its origin as inadequate, but that does not concern us here at all. What we here claim is that this voice of Conscience, which we all accept, tells us, when really understood, not only of duty, but of God, and not as an explanation of its *origin*, but as involved in the *content* of its utterances.

[1] See C. G. Jung, *Symbole und Wandlungen der Libido*, translated as *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, by B. M. Hinkle.

Our moral consciousness, when taken in earnest, involves us in a whole realm of religious truth.

(2) But how, precisely? Here again we must be on our guard—against conceiving faith as a mere *postulate* or *inference* from morality. In this connexion we cannot but think of Immanuel Kant. Now, it is certainly Kant's great merit to have brought philosophy back to the recognition of the fact that religious faith, while reasonable, is not a matter of speculative proof, but of practical conviction, and is thus morally conditioned. Moreover, while thus connecting faith with the moral life, he entirely escaped the shallow error which we have in the foregoing pages been repudiating: of making faith depend on an argument from the existence of the moral law in us to a God who must have implanted it. The Kantian argument assumes not only the existence, but the validity of the moral consciousness, as a starting-point for theological belief. The "ought" is taken not as a subjective psychological fact to be explained, but as an objective reality. Now the moral consciousness, according to Kant, not only lays this "ought" upon us, but demands that obedience to it must be ultimately conjoined with happiness; and thus we are justified in postulating God as the guarantor of that conjunction. This sounds an extraordinarily rough-and-ready argument. The gist of it, indeed, is that the moral imperative, which we cannot doubt, involves us in a realm of ends, and that such a realm is unthinkable without the idea of God. Yet we cannot but feel that Kant's argument is thoroughly unsatisfying as an account of faith, chiefly perhaps because it seems to reduce faith to a mere inference, and thus to attenuate the religious life to a mere course of doing one's duty with the theological postulate in the back of one's mind. This defect has often been noted. One writer complains that Kant's view "leaves room for no knowledge of God except as a postulate." [1] Professor Taylor points out that "he, in effect, denies that we have any experience of God at all," and that he pronounces mystics

[1] Professor W. Morgan, article "Faith (Christian)," in *E.R.E.* v. 691.

who claim such an experience to be mere fanatics.[1] The Russian Solovyof, speaking of Kant's view of faith, says: "There is no faith about it, for faith cannot be a deduction." [2] Rudolf Otto protests that "religion is not in vassalage to either morality or teleology, '*ethos*' or '*telos*,' and does not draw its life from postulates." [3] It is highly important for us to avoid the appearance of error which provokes these criticisms.[4] Albrecht Ritschl, who in these matters was largely a Kantian, was accused of "making religion a subordinate appendix to morals." His reply was to refer somewhat pettishly to the familiar distinction between the *ratio essendi* and the *ratio cognoscendi*.[5] That is to say, religious reality is indeed for him the basis of all moral reality, but it is through the knowledge of the moral reality, of which we are immediately certain, that we can establish the existence of its religious foundation. Morality is thus the *ratio cognoscendi* of religion. But can we be quite content even with that position?

Surely the realm of religious reality is given us in, or with, our moral consciousness in a much more direct way than that. Is it too paradoxical in the modern world to say that faith in God is a very part of our moral consciousness, without which the latter becomes meaningless? This is not to reduce religion to "mere morality," but rather to abolish "mere morality" as an abortion, and to set morality in the heart of religion, where alone it has a meaning. This may sound strange doctrine to many a moralist, but signs are not wanting that this is the position to which modern thinking is being driven. Either our

[1] Article "Theism," *E.R.E.* xii. 280.

[2] Vladimir Solovyof, *The Justification of the Good*, trans. Duddington, p. 157.

[3] Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. J. W. Harvey, p. 140. A discussion of Otto's own views will be given in the next chapter.

[4] I do not wish to develop my argument in too definite opposition to Kant, especially as I am not acquainted with his *Opus Postumum*, in which, as I have discovered, some find a view much more like that which I have tried to work out in these pages.

[5] A. Ritschl, *Justification and Reconciliation* (The Positive Development of the Doctrine). English trans. ed. Mackintosh and Macaulay, p. 226, footnote.

moral values tell us something about the nature and purpose of reality (*i.e.* give us the germ of religious belief) or they are subjective and therefore meaningless. The conviction, " I ought to do this," if it means anything at all, tells me something not simply about myself or about the action indicated, but about the very meaning of the universe.

There are, indeed, schools of moralists who maintain that the ultimate ethical concept is not " ought " but " the good," that the former is always to be derived from the latter, and that the latter is a simple, indefinable concept which can be predicated of anything without implying any view whatever as to the constitution of the universe—that, in short, it is impossible to argue from value to reality. But surely, even on such a theory of ethics, the passage from " This is good " to " I ought to do (or seek) this " is a passage from value to reality. And yet how can such a passage be made—how can we ever get as far as the " ought " at all, unless the concept " good " has in itself the reference to reality ?[1] If " good " is a simple, indefinable concept without any such reference, how can I pass from it to the judgment that I *ought* to seek what is good ? One answer, of course, is that this judgment is merely a psychological statement about my tastes or tendencies ; but it is impossible to see how this leaves room for anything that can be called morality at all. This would, indeed, bring value and reality, or " ought " and " is," together with a vengeance—by reducing the former to the latter in a purely naturalistic sense, and making goodness a matter of taste. This really seems to be the position to which those must be driven who will not allow that our moral consciousness can tell us anything about the constitution or meaning of the universe.

[1] Cf. Professor Sorley's argument that a judgment of value " has a definite bearing upon existence, and can always be stated so as to bring out this reference : the thing is worth existing, or ought to be, or to be in such and such a manner. And at the same time this form distinguishes it from the descriptive propositions of natural science. It cannot be put into words without the unique notion indicated by ' worth ' or ' ought ' or some similar phrase " (*Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 78).

The most notable example in our time is Mr. Bertrand Russell, who has long protested against the legitimacy of moral faith—against the whole idea (which he thinks was introduced by Plato and has vitiated much of human thought ever since) that our ethical convictions should be allowed to affect our beliefs about the ultimate nature of things. "Ethical considerations can only legitimately appear when the truth has been ascertained: they can and should appear as determining our feeling towards the truth, and our manner of ordering our lives in view of the truth, but not as themselves dictating what the truth is to be." "To regard ethical notions as a key to the understanding of the world is essentially pre-Copernican." This, of course, arose out of Mr. Russell's general ethical theory, that the ultimate ethical concept of "the good" is a simple indefinable concept involving no reference to existence. But the development of Mr. Russell's own thought indicates how impossible it is to leave "the good" thus suspended in mid air, held up by neither man nor God; for he has gradually subsided into the view that it has no support except in man, that it is no more than a matter of our subjective desires. "Ethical metaphysics is fundamentally an attempt, however disguised, to give legislative force to our own wishes." [1] And in the preface to the same volume, in speaking of the date at which one of its earliest essays was written: "I feel less convinced than I then did of the objectivity of good and evil." In a later book, Mr. Russell has gone still further in the same direction. "It is we who create value, and our desires which confer value. In this realm we are kings, and we debase our kingship if we bow down to Nature. It is for us to determine the good life, not for Nature—not even for Nature personified as God." "What we 'ought' to desire is merely what some one else wishes us to desire." [2] This is a striking illustration of the lesson we are learning: that value and reality, the "ought" and the "is," cannot really be kept apart; and that we have to choose between unifying them

[1] Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 7, 107.
[2] Bertrand Russell, *What I believe*, pp. 25, 37.

on the naturalistic plane by reducing the "ought" to a mere "is" of subjective taste (which makes nonsense of morality) and unifying them on the religious plane by interpreting the "ought" as the "is" of a divine purpose. Those who refuse to let the moral consciousness tell us anything about the nature and meaning of the universe will end by making it tell us nothing at all—nothing with any objective validity.[1] If the voice of Conscience means anything at all, it means—God. As Troeltsch tells us, every atheistic ethic gets driven back ultimately upon religious fundamentals: it really believes in God, even though it fights shy of the name.[2] Morality without religion becomes meaningless.

It is not our task here to elaborate a complete theory of ethics, showing in detail how morality always implies a conviction regarding the constitution of reality; or a complete system of theology, showing how this germinal conviction, when worked out, develops into all the riches of the (Christian) conception of God—a process which, after all, takes place not in the "School" but in the Church, not on paper but in the experience of life. It is sufficient if we have been able to exhibit the nature of this seed of faith, and its connexion with those moral values which, as the modern world is beginning to learn, fail us entirely unless we can give them a religious meaning.

All this does not mean, of course, that we have first to prove religion, that we may be sure of morality, or that

[1] Another illustration may be given. Professor John Laird, in his *Study in Moral Theory*, endeavours to keep value and existence, or the "ought" and the "is," thus separate, while emphatically rejecting the view expressed by Mr. Havelock Ellis that moral goodness is a matter of taste. A critic, who signs himself "S. A." (I take him to be Professor Alexander), and who calls himself "a reviewer on the extreme left," questions whether we ought not to be led to the view "that 'ought' is perhaps not opposed to 'is' but a species of it," and that the above opinion of Mr. Ellis, which makes goodness a matter of taste, "is in the end correct." This seems to illustrate what ethics ends in when it tries to leave its concepts hanging in the air without any foothold in existence. See *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, April 23, 1926, p. 333.

[2] See his essay on "Atheistische Ethik" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. ii., especially p. 541.

we may have a " sanction " for morality. Every true man, however bewildered he may be about religious doctrine, and however this bewilderment may even overcloud his moral life, is absolutely sure of morality when it comes to the actual practice of daily life ; and certainly not as a *mere means* to some religious or other-worldly end : he is sure that, even if there should be no God, right is right, and is worth choosing, absolutely, for its own sake. But in being thus sure of morality, he is also (we contend) sure of religion, though he does not realize it. He has the germ which grows into religious belief. And the more he understands his moral convictions, with that deep kind of understanding which comes of taking them in dead earnest, and which alone is of much account in these matters, the more will he find in them the assurance of the God who was really speaking through them from the beginning. So long as he was uncertain about God, he was obeying the voice of Conscience with an aching sense of bewilderment, unable to doubt it in practice, and yet unable to say what it all meant—since, if it means anything it means God. Thus when he does come to the assurance of God, it is in a much more direct way than through a moral postulate, inference, or deduction. It is well put again by Solovyof in his criticism of Kant : " The necessary presupposition of morality, namely, the existence of God and of an immortal soul, is not a demand for something extraneous to morality and additional to it, but is its own inner basis. God and the soul are not the postulates of the moral law, but the direct creative forces of the moral reality." Again : " I can do good consciously and rationally only if I believe in the good and in its objective independent significance in the world, *i.e.* in other words, if I believe in the moral order, in Providence, in God. This faith is logically prior to all particular religious beliefs and institutions, and in this sense it forms the so-called natural religion." [1] It is not a case of establishing our belief in God by " the moral argument," that we may then work it out in the actual experience of religion. To describe it so would be

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 157 f., and p. 87.

to repeat the error which we repudiated in our chapter on "Faith and Religious Experience." Faith, we then saw, cannot have its basis outside of religious experience altogether and prior to it. Therefore we must not think of it as a deduction from the judgments of the moral consciousness. The germ of religion is positively contained in these judgments. Moral conviction and religious faith are really inseparable—that is what we have now learned; and it is probably never questioned by the unsophisticated mind.[1] As for the doubter, when such a man comes to understand, in the deep inward practical sense, the deliverances of his moral consciousness, and thus to hear in them the voice of God, giving a full meaning to what seemed meaningless before, this is both faith and religious experience in one, and then his religion *includes* his morality—transformed. Hitherto it was "mere morality," perhaps weary and unsuccessful, though sincere and earnest. Now it becomes evangelized, filled with power by "saving faith": a faith which makes morality far more victorious, while it can only come to those who are morally sincere. Until a man has got as far as this, he has not really understood his moral convictions. Yet he is sure of these convictions in practice. That is the ultimate rock beyond which his scepticism cannot go. In the choices of actual life he plainly hears the voice saying, "This is the way: walk in it," and the more faithfully he hearkens, the more does he realize it to be the voice of God, in whom he thought he did not believe. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

(3) A further question that arises for us at this point is as to whether the "moral conviction," which we are finding to be fundamental, is to be taken in the narrow sense; whether the "absolute values" in which God is revealed are to be narrowed down to moral values in distinction

[1] Cf. Prof. John Baillie: "What we call 'mere morality' is but a latter-day abstraction which has never yet shown itself to possess any social stability. Where no disturbing influence enters in, our knowledge of good and evil is naturally, and without further ado, taken by us to be a knowledge of the ultimate principles of the constitution of the System to which we belong" (*The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul*, p. 227).

from intellectual and æsthetic values—to goodness in distinction from truth and beauty. This is a very living question at the present time. There is a widespread tendency to think that in the nineteenth century, from which in this chapter we have been learning so much, religious people valued moral goodness too exclusively, and to contend that the love of truth and the love of beauty have a connexion with religion which has been somewhat disastrously neglected. The poets of the Romantic Movement, indeed, had a religion of beauty, but their successors of the Victorian age may have emphasized too exclusively the ethical approach to religious faith; and in our own time there is a wholesome reaction. There is a strong tendency to speak of faith as the highest expression of the whole personality, moral, intellectual, and æsthetic. "Is it really," asks Dean Inge, "a worthy or a possible conception of God, that He is interested only in conduct, and is destitute of anything corresponding to what in us are called intellectual and æsthetic interests?"[1] The Dean predicts that "the intellect must play a greater part in the life of Faith in the future than it has done in the past";[2] and he has a chapter on "The Æsthetic Ground of Faith." Since he wrote, the tendency has become still more marked in religious circles to proclaim especially "the necessity of art" and to plead for "beauty in religion"; and it is increasingly common for religious thinkers to speak not simply of *moral* values as the foundation of our religious beliefs, but of absolute values in general, and to set goodness, truth, and beauty alongside of each other as co-ordinate revelations of the divine.

With most of this we can very heartily agree. Every religious man who loves beauty in nature or art must know what it is to find therein a revelation of that Eternal Beauty whom St. Augustine deplored that he had been so late in learning to love;[3] and every faithful lover of truth must

[1] W. R. Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, pp. 158 f.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 201.

[3] *Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova, Conf.*, lib. x. cap. xxvii.

be considered to be a seeker after Him whom St. Augustine came to adore as "the Truth which presides over all things."[1] But the theory of faith which we have been elaborating must be taken in a sense which embraces all this, and there need be no difficulty here. For, after all, the *moral* consciousness covers more than the field of conduct, of practical goodness, in the narrow sense. Thus the moral is not simply one aspect alongside of the æsthetic and the intellectual. That scheme which arranges goodness, beauty, and truth in a symmetrical co-ordination, is far too simple, far simpler than life itself. There is obviously a sense in which the moral claims authority over the whole of human life, and spreads its dominion over the fields where the other values also reign. Devotion to truth or to beauty is obviously a moral quality. The precise sense in which this is true may be a matter of controversy. Mr. Middleton Murry, who is assuredly a lover of beauty, is persuaded "that in the only sense of the word art that really matters to succeed as an artist is a moral triumph, and to fail as an artist is a moral failure."[2] However that may be, it is a very familiar reflection, and one which provides some of the chief complications in the philosophical study of ethics, that morality is concerned not only with "moral" goods in the narrow sense, but also with intellectual and æsthetic goods.[3] Even if it be the case that the moral consciousness has nothing to do directly with determining which things are beautiful or true, it does nevertheless enjoin the quest of these things and condemn the tendency to be deflected from them by other considerations. Thus morality refuses to leave anything out of its sweep, and instead of being co-ordinate with the æsthetic and the logical, stands in a sense above them, or includes them, so that we can never get away from the moral consciousness at all. Logic and æsthetics thus "have a moral implication." "Every imperative is a

[1] *Tu es veritas super omnia praesidens, ibid.* lib. x. cap. xli.

[2] *To the Unknown God,* p. 246.

[3] The student will think at once of T. H. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics.* See also J. Laird, *A Study in Moral Theory,* ch. i. and ii.; and Troeltsch's paper on "The Ethics of the Cultural Values," in the volume of translations, *Christian Thought,* ed. Baron von Hügel.

moral imperative." "It is a moral duty to seek beauty, to think truly, to promote happiness." [1] "The scientific or the artistic conscience," says Professor Laird, "*is* a conscience; yet the general or moral conscience asserts its claim to be suzerain over both." "The pursuit of truth and of beauty," says Professor Sorley, "are themselves modes of moral activity." "Morality cannot be isolated from any part of life." [2] "Besides the 'ought' of conduct," wrote George Tyrrell, "there is the 'ought' of thinking and the 'ought' of feeling"; [3] and, of course, all these "oughts" are included in the moral life. Thus morality covers the whole of life. There is, of course, also a sense in which the logical and the æsthetic may be said, in their turn, and from their point of view, to cover the whole of life. But we seem to be quite justified in contending that it is through the moral point of view (from which, of course, we can embrace all these other goods in the sweep of our vision) that we are led to the vision of religious truth. It is interesting to find Bosanquet arguing that even a naïve morality has in it the root of the matter, more than intellectual or æsthetic excellence taken by themselves. "Simple morality can more nearly stand alone, and its absence shakes the whole foundations of life and mind." The distinction between morality and intellectual or æsthetic excellence is "a distinction of degree between the more and the less fundamental of the ideas which govern life," and "these [latter] excellences *per se* are, after all, provincial moralities." [4] Morality may exist in a very pure and high form in a life which has little of either intellectual grasp or æsthetic perception; and so can religion. But surely we would not admit that a pure and high religion is compatible with moral obtuseness. Dr. Thouless refers to the case of Benvenuto Cellini, who was "extremely religious and extremely wicked." "He lived in an atmosphere of

[1] J. Laird, *op. cit.* pp. 52, 54, 58.

[2] W. R. Sorley, *op. cit.* pp. 510 f.

[3] G. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 115.

[4] B. Bosanquet, *The Principle of Individuality and Value*, pp. 347 f. and footnote. For the reference I am indebted to Professor Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of God*, pp. 30 f.

exalted religious emotion. Yet his life was one of profligacy and murder, lived without any consciousness of inconsistency. His religion meant nothing to his morality." [1] Whether this is an accurate description of Cellini or not, we surely need have no hesitation in saying that such religion simply was not religion at all. Apart from any preconceived theory, that is the judgment which would certainly be passed upon it by any naïve religious mind : that such religion has not the root of the matter in it. The man may have emotions which he thinks are religious, but he is not really in touch with God. " He hath not seen him, neither known him " ; for " if we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." [2] There may, indeed, be no man quite so far from God as that. But we seem fully justified in saying that apart from the moral consciousness—apart from that attitude to life and that perception of absolute values—there can be no knowledge of God at all, and no religion ; and that this implies no unduly moralistic narrowing of religion, which would leave out truth and beauty, since the moral life claims and embraces all these values of our world, all the riches of our human nature, and the same can be true of the religious life which arises out of it. These few words have not, indeed, given a satisfying theory of the whole relation of morality to intellectual and æsthetic goods (perhaps no moralist has ever succeeded in doing that), but they are sufficient to safeguard our argument against misunderstanding, and to justify us in continuing to speak, sometimes of absolute values, goodness, truth, and beauty, but sometimes briefly of Conscience, as the revelation of God and the bed-rock of faith. For this Conscience of which we speak is not (we have now seen) a thin and isolated voice crying in the wilderness of our human nature. It is the moral consciousness ; the apprehension of absolute values ; which traverses the whole field of life, making the wilderness to blossom as the rose, reducing confusion to order and beauty,

[1] R. H. Thouless, *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, pp. 2 and 56.

[2] 1 John 1^6, 3^6.

bringing cosmos out of chaos, claiming all values as its own and rejoicing in the mystery of their mingled lights; and then inevitably turning into something higher still, the religious consciousness; and so discovering the God whose garden it had kept, whose sun and wind and rain and creative power it had been blindly using. "If any man will do his will, he shall know"; "He that doeth the truth cometh to the light"; and this is faith.

V

The view of faith to which we are being led may seem to imply that every man who is loyal to his moral convictions has religious faith in his heart, or at least that every such man is bound to attain to such a faith as time goes on; and this appears impossible to reconcile with the familiar facts of modern life. How can we maintain that the moral life and religious faith are thus inseparable? Are there not in the modern world many good men, of pure and earnest and self-sacrificing moral life, who are entirely devoid of any positive religious beliefs? Have we not in this very study seen it to be a common thing for moral convictions and loyalties to remain unshaken when all religious belief has gone? And it seems impossible even to maintain that loyalty to one's moral convictions always leads in the long run to religious belief: many great names of the modern world will spring up in the reader's mind to contradict that notion.

Yet there is in the consciousness of the modern world a deep strain of wisdom which tells us that every good man somehow has the root of the matter in him, the germ of religious faith, even if he is hindered from the realization of it by the necessity of rejecting false formulations with which faith has come to be associated. This is the truth which Tennyson expressed classically when he said that "There lives more faith in honest doubt . . . than in half the creeds." But even the naïve religious mind is aware of it. The present writer can remember the comment made by a quite unsophisticated religious woman in speak-

ing of the local atheist, who was really a good sort of man : " He *thinks* he's an atheist, but he's better than his creed." The implication is that no good man is really an atheist, though he may call himself such. Many illustrations of this insight might be given from modern literature. Dr. L. P. Jacks has a story of a village cobbler who " spent his breath in proving that God did not exist, but spent his life in proving that He did." [1] Another perfect illustration may be found in that great novel which we have already found so illuminating, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenin.* Levin was " an unbeliever," and had been one for many years, overcome by the scientific difficulties which stood in the way of religious belief, and always unhappy about it. But in a moment of great anxiety he suddenly caught himself ejaculating a prayer. " At that instant he knew that all his doubts, even the impossibility of believing with his reason, of which he was aware in himself, did not in the least hinder his turning to God. All of that now floated out of his soul like dust." Again, his devoted and religious young wife did not worry at all about what he called his unbelief, though she knew that all unbelievers would be damned. She had been terribly distressed when he told her that in former days he had been guilty of moral lapses ; but now " she thought with a smile of his unbelief, and told herself that he was absurd." " He an unbeliever indeed ! With his heart, his dread of offending any one, even a

[1] L. P. Jacks, *Mad Shepherds* ; cited by Dr. Richard Roberts in the article quoted below. The following are two striking, if extreme, statements of this idea. Mr. Bernard Shaw writes : " The old belief that it matters dreadfully to God whether a man thinks himself an atheist or not, and that the extent to which it matters can be stated with exactness as one single damn, was an error ; for the divinity is in the honor and public spirit, not in the mouthed *credo* or *non credo* " (Preface to *Back to Methuselah,* p. lxiv). Mr. Middleton Murry writes : " When I say that God is manifest in the tone and manner in which a Hardy or a Tchehof asks ' Does God exist ? ' I mean that the very impulse which drives such men to that utter honesty we feel in their work, is mysterious. Why is it that they *cannot* tell lies ? Why is it that they *must* be loyal to their experience, and therefore to humanity ? . . . And the only answer I can give that satisfies me is that they acknowledge, somehow, an allegiance to a hidden universe . . ." (*To the Unknown God,* p. 61).

child! Everything for others, nothing for himself." [1] She felt that a good man like him could not *really* be an unbeliever, whatever his intellectual position might be. What could unbelief *mean* in such a man, who obviously believed in those absolute values which are one with the Kingdom of God? And when Levin did eventually find faith, as we saw, it seemed to him but the discovery of something which had been in him all the time, and on which he had been living, though he had not realized it. "Thou wouldest not be seeking Me," said the divine voice to Pascal, "if thou didst not possess Me." [2]

Perhaps something like this is true of all those good and earnest men who in the modern world have professed themselves unable to believe in the truths of religion. "Huxley and Tyndall," a recent writer tells us, "were, for all their agnosticism, men of faith. They drifted neither to egoism nor to pessimism, but went on bravely working and living for truth and humanity. Plainly they had some belief that went beyond their scepticism; a faith which overleapt their knowledge and their ignorance. There was some real transcendental 'value' to which they were loyal, and by which they lived, even though they were unable to give it a name." This "raises the question whether men who take life seriously ever cease to believe in God; or if they do cease to believe in God, whether they do not soon or late have to discover a working substitute for God." [3] There is surely a deep truth in this idea that good and earnest men are never without the germ of faith. They may call themselves sceptics or atheists, they may have rejected the "theistic" position, and given up all religious practice. That may be because they associate religion and the belief in God with certain theories which they perceive to be untenable, and these false constructions in tumbling down have pulled down with them all religious belief. Yet the germ of faith, out of which all religious belief grows, is still there, unrealized; choked for want of

[1] *Anna Karenin*, trans. C. Garnett, vol. ii. pp. 305, 389 f.
[2] Pascal, *Pensées* (Brunschvicg), vii. 555.
[3] Dr. Richard Roberts, in *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xxiii. p. 25.

natural expression; starved, because it is not fed upon any *confessio fidei* in which it can recognize itself; and yet not dead, so long as the man has his moral ideal.[1] Every man with a moral ideal has in him this unconscious faith.[2]

Not that such unconscious faith is enough to be content with. Far from it! If a man goes through life with a negative and sceptical theory, or with an agnostic or doubtful mind about the truths of religion, the faith that is in him will be largely paralysed. If our faith is to come to its own in our spiritual lives, it must be consciously realized, and must grow up under the guidance of religious tradition into an organism of beliefs by which we can regulate our religious practice. For, after all, religion is more than morality, and can never express itself fully in the moral life alone, though it is in the practical certainties of the moral life that it realizes, in the last resort, its own indefectible certainty. Faith requires its own self-conscious expression: we must take words, and render the offerings of our lips. Faith leads us into an unimaginable realm, which we cannot behold in its beauty except in the life of worship. Therefore it is tragic when good men feel themselves cut off from all this, and go through life rejecting religion, because it has never been set before them in such a way that they can see what it really is, though they have in them, all the while, that seed of faith which might grow into the fulness of the religious life. Such men believe in absolute values, they live by the very things of which God's Kingdom is made, they breathe the faith which is the soul of all religious belief, and which alone has ever led mankind to the idea of God at all; and yet they do not know it. There have been certain ages in the history of religion when this kind of thing was especially common. Such good men often have a deep unhappiness in their souls. It is the intimation of that

[1] Cf. Max Müller: "We ought never to call a man an atheist, and say that he does not believe in God, till we know what kind of God it is he has been brought up to believe in, and what kind of God it is that he rejects, it may be, from the best and highest motives" (from his *Gifford Lectures*, included in the selection, *Thoughts on Life and Religion*).

[2] See the fine discussion of unconscious faith in the last lecture of D. W. Forrest's *The Christ of History and of Experience.*

divine reality which their negative theory prevents them from consciously enjoying. It is because their moral consciousness, to which they are so faithful, tells them of something more than morality, and yet the blissful Something of which it tells them seems an unimaginable dream in which, with intellectual honesty, they dare not believe. Thus they are shut up to the moral life alone ; and yet their souls pine for that fruition of the Divine, in which they do really believe with the elemental faith which expresses itself but partially in their moral consciousness.

In the light of all this it does not, after all, seem quite correct to speak, as we have at certain points been obliged to do, of faith as *based upon* our moral consciousness or our apprehension of values. For faith gives us something more and other than all these values put together, and water cannot rise higher than its source. It is here, indeed, that we realize what is meant by saying that faith is one of the things which are so fundamental that they have no foundations. Faith is not based upon anything. And this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult, when one is pressed, to state in precise logical terms faith's argument from moral reality to God. It is because there is really no such argument. The germ of faith in God is *present* (we have now seen) even in the moral conviction. To put it somewhat dangerously : faith is what every one knows, if only one is willing to know it. Faith is the inward voice which all can hear increasingly according to their loyalty. This is the real " religious *a priori*." It is the elemental sense of the Divine which expresses itself in all our values, though not completely in any of them or in all of them put together. When it seeks to express itself directly in words descriptive of the divine Reality (as it must needs do), it is obliged to use inadequate symbols ; and these, along with the unwarrantable deductions made from them, sometimes perplex men of intellectual sincerity, and make them reject or doubt the whole truth of their faith. Yet, when they come to its expression in their practical moral lives, they have reached the ultimate limit of their doubts, they have come to an indubitable deliverance of the faith that is

in them. And it is (as we have seen) by loyalty to this indubitable moral conviction that they will attain to a deeper understanding of it, and thus haply to a conscious use of the religious faith which is its inner meaning. This is the sense in which we have found it natural to speak of faith as based upon our moral convictions or our absolute values, because its ultimate entrenchment is in the assurance that somehow these values are somewhere perfectly realized.

But again, we must remind ourselves that religion is not a matter of repeating that bare assurance in our hearts over and over again every day we live. That bare and ultimate remnant of conviction, which outlasts all the blight of doubt, is (to go back to the inevitable metaphor) but the tiny seed out of which the great tree of religion has to grow ; and not in a day, or even in the lifetime of an individual, isolated from religious tradition and fellowship, but gradually in its proper environment, the experience of life, the fellowship of the Church, the inheritance of the saints. Thus the " mustard-seed " of our faith grows into a rich organism of belief, which we could never have developed in a short lifetime for ourselves ; the tradition we have inherited draws forth our faith ; until the things which once perhaps we doubted or denied become our own familiar possessions, upon which we live. To many religious people, indeed, the experience of conscious doubt never comes at all. The truths which they receive from tradition are never actively questioned, but are gradually made their own in the experience of religion without any intellectual struggle. This is perhaps the commoner case. But in this case also, if the inherited system of beliefs is really apprehended, it is because the soul possesses the grain of seed out of which all religious beliefs have grown. This is the faith of the simple charwoman, with which we began our study. She may appear to be merely accepting an inherited system of beliefs which she cannot even understand. But because she has a loyal heart, because she takes her Conscience in earnest, because she seeks whatsoever things are pure and just for their own sake, she has in the depths of her

soul the one essential link of faith's great argument, by which she can lay hold, and keep hold, of its tradition for herself. To work out upon paper the whole argument which develops the seed into a system of religious belief is the great task of theology. Yet, as has already been said, it is not really in the theologian's brain or in his notebooks that this development first takes place. It is in the experience of religious people living in fellowship and service age after age. The theologian can do little more than follow after. And even the simple, faithful woman can do the same in her way. She has the key to the understanding of the whole argument. She has in her that which alone the organism of religious belief can take for its seed and root. This is what we set out to seek : that element without which neither " authority " nor " reason " can give faith either to the simple woman or to the learned divine. It is found in the ineradicable conviction, which comes to us as we seek to be loyal to the good we know, and assures us that the Heart of Existence is good, with a perfection of which our highest values are but shadows and images. This in itself is but as a grain of mustard-seed. But because the life of God was in it from the beginning, as God is in all our values, it grows into a great tree, drawing nourishment from every element of its environment and transmuting all into the rich fruitfulness of religion ; striking its roots wide and deep, lifting its branches to Heaven, and spreading them over the whole of human life ; like that mystical Vine of God's planting which " took deep root and filled the land," until " the mountains were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the cedars of God."

CHAPTER VI

FAITH AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

SYNOPSIS

THIS chapter develops our theory by considering some *objections*. Has our account of faith done justice to the actual process by which man comes to the knowledge of God ?

I. Some will say that our account is too "*irrational*" : that it was not by anything like a moral faith that mankind came to believe in gods (since religion and morals had originally no connexion), but by primitive speculation (the *animistic* theory) ; and that it was not trust, but *fear*, that made men worship them. But *this objection is out of date*. Primitive morality (such as it is) and primitive religion form one homogeneous whole, which has no essential connexion with the animistic belief in spirits, and which never lives upon mere fear, but has always something of the element of trust in a good and friendly power. Nor can " savage supreme beings " be cited against our view. This whole objection cannot survive the new light shed by Robertson Smith, Söderblom, Durkheim, Marett, G. F. Moore (widely as these may differ from each other or from us in their general view of religion). Moreover, the process by which polytheism passes into monotheism, not by a speculative desire for unity, but (through a monolatrous stage) by a moral constraint, as in Israel, is instructive in support of our view.

II. But others will object that our account is too "*rational*" : that it does not allow for the purely non-rational element of *awe* (quite distinct from moral trust) which is of the essence of religion. This idea is part of a widespread contemporary tendency, whose most distinguished representative is Rudolf Otto, with his theory of the *numinous*. But such a movement is in danger of reviving an element which it is the very glory of religion to have been gradually eliminating in the course of its age-long progress. It is quite possible to avoid the dreary errors of " rationalism " and to conserve the *indispensable element of profound mystery* in religion, without resorting to Otto's dangerous and difficult theory : namely, by remembering that our highest human values, apart from which we can have no clue at all to the Divine, are yet but *shadows and images of an ineffable and incomprehensible Reality* which is the home of the religious soul.

III. As regards the *mystical* knowledge of God : the fact that it is *morally conditioned*, and has a vital connexion with purity of heart, is precisely what has always been maintained by the truest mystics themselves and the authoritative writers on mysticism. The mystic (like the evangelical) must, of course, insist that religion is *more* than morality. Yet it is not *separate* from morality. (Baron von Hügel and Tyrrell quoted.) It is a *faith*, broad-based upon all the values of our human nature, which are the true, yet symbolic and incomplete, revelations of a God whose ways are " past finding out " but are worthy to be trusted.

CHAPTER VI

Faith and the Knowledge of God

There will be some who will consider that the argument which we have exhibited as faith's argument, even if it be valid in itself, is quite different from the actual course by which mankind has arrived at the idea of God; that, in short, faith's real argument, or the real basis of the belief in God, has no essential connexion with the moral consciousness, though morality has in the course of history come to be closely conjoined with religion. This objection is likely to be made from two different sides: some will complain that we have exhibited the belief in God in a too rationalistic light, and shut our eyes to the distinctively *religious* interest or instinct, which has nothing to do with the moral; while others will complain that we have unduly derationalized the belief in God, in tracing to the moral consciousness a set of ideas which really owed their origin rather to a kind of primitive speculation. And both of these objections—that our account is too rational, and that it is too irrational—will probably claim the support of considerations derived from the study of primitive religion. Let us take them in the reverse order from that in which we have named them.

I

On the one hand, then, it may be complained that if we had paid more attention to the question of origins as investigated by the comparative science of religions we should have found that the belief in gods did not originate through moral conviction but through primitive speculation. Writers of various schools assume that it must always be a deplorable mistake to endeavour to determine the essence

of religion without studying it in its primitive beginnings. Durkheim complains that philosophers " confine themselves to analysing the idea which they make for themselves of religion, except as they illustrate the results of this mental analysis by examples borrowed from the religions which best realize their ideal " ; [1] whereas they ought to study the matter where it presents itself in the simplest form, namely, in the undifferentiated whole of primitive religion. We shall reserve the question as to how far this advice is good ; and, meanwhile, let us examine what the science of religions really has to say regarding the origin of belief in God.

Forty years ago an authority on the history of religions, Chantepie de la Saussaye, gave it as his opinion that " the gods do not owe their origin to moral ideas," [2] and many other investigators might have been found taking the same view. There was and is, of course, no question as to the close connexion which has existed between morality and religion in the course of human history. But we are now concerned with their primitive beginnings. Is it the case that in their origins morality and religion were quite separate, so that the idea of a God or gods cannot fairly be explained as an out-growth of the moral consciousness with its conviction of absolute values ? According to Professor Morris Jastrow, " the religious sentiment in man has an existence quite independent of morality " ; and as regards primitive religious beliefs and customs, " it will similarly be found that ethical questions are not at all involved." [3] Of course, historical science cannot deal with actual " origins." But if it can point to cases where religion exists in primitive tribes without any connexion at all with morality, if it can faithfully describe primitive religion without introducing

[1] Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. J. W. Swain, p. 4.

[2] P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, trans. B. S. Collyer-Ferguson, p. 236. He goes on, of course, to point out the other side of it too. His words are : " Although the gods do not owe their origin to moral ideas, they acquire, nevertheless, a high importance for morality."

[3] Morris Jastrow, *The Study of Religion*, pp. 204 f.

anything that can be called ethical, this would certainly be a difficulty for the view we have been developing, for it would then appear that the connexion of religion with the moral consciousness is not essential but secondary. The objector might go on to point out that, though religion has come to be moralized in the course of human history, it was not by anything that can be called a moral demand that men came to form the idea of spiritual beings to whom worship could be directed. It was not as an ethical necessity that religious belief originated, or as a matter of moral faith: it had no connexion with morals, or with anything like an attitude of trust in the powers that rule the universe. It was rather by a primitive kind of speculation or philosophy. It began with a kind of "Animism" or "Animatism," [1] which tended to regard common objects as alive and perhaps in a sense personal. The rise of this tendency—so the theory runs—was helped by primitive man's experience of dreams, in which his own soul seemed as a separate entity to wander to distant places while his body lay asleep, and in which also the souls of the dead, whose bodies were buried, seemed to return and visit him. Gradually all causation in the world came to be attributed by primitive speculation to the agency of similar souls; and so, for the imagination of primitive man, the universe came to be peopled with innumerable spirits whose activity influenced his life at every point. And as for the practice of religious worship towards these mysterious spirits, that did not originate—it has been maintained—in a feeling of trust, as if they were morally trustworthy, but in a feeling of fear, because they were capricious and perhaps malicious. At least they were mysterious and powerful, and they had to be propitiated and humoured; and so primitive man, in his abject terror, endeavoured to please them by observances and offerings; and this was the origin of all religion. "Neither the souls or spirits, nor the gods of nature, are originally or necessarily guardians of any moral law, and

[1] "Animism" was Tylor's word. Marett coined the word "Animatism" to denote the view which regards objects as alive and animate, but has not got as far as to conceive of souls or spirits dwelling in them.

neither the benefits expected nor the dangers feared from them are directly connected with moral conditions or thoughts." [1] If all this is true, it certainly provides a serious embarrassment for our view that religious belief somehow arises out of the moral consciousness and is essentially a matter of confidence in a goodness at the heart of all things; and this is perhaps the first objection that will occur to many minds.

But it cannot be denied that in view of more recent investigation into the historical beginnings of religion, this objection has far less force than it had a generation ago, and is, indeed, largely out of date. As regards the connexion, or lack of connexion, between religion and morality in primitive civilization, some earlier pronouncements have undoubtedly proved to be superficial, and have been unable to survive a more sympathetic understanding of the evidence. It is, of course, notorious that many of the controversies in this whole region of inquiry have been carried on at cross-purposes, because different writers have had different standards as to what the words " religion " and " morality " were to include. Wundt points out very interestingly how, in 1880, Roskoff declared that there were no races on earth without some form of religion; and, about twenty years later, the brothers Sarasin declared that the Veddahs of Ceylon had no religion; whereas the facts described in both cases were essentially the same, but were put down as religion in the one case and as magic in the other.[2] Similar confusions have existed with regard to morality, and for similar reasons; but most authorities would now agree that some kind of morality worthy of the name exists in every human tribe, and sometimes a surprisingly high kind in very primitive tribes. Professor G. F. Moore tells us, out of his very wide knowledge, that " the high level of morals in such points as honesty, trustworthiness, fidelity, among many savage tribes has often been attested." [3] It seems

[1] Ch. de la Saussaye, *op. cit.* p. 50.

[2] W. Wundt, *Elements of Folk Psychology*, trans. Schaub, pp. 75 f.

[3] G. F. Moore, *The Birth and Growth of Religion*, p. 67. Cf. Morris Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 208.

questionable whether he does not go too far when he says that the morality of primitive peoples consists in nothing more than conformity to tribal custom ;[1] but he goes to the root of the matter when he points out that even though "many of their customs have nothing to do with what we call morals," and "others are so repugnant to our ethics that we stigmatize them as grossly immoral," nevertheless "by the historical criterion both were moral and as such obligatory."[2]

When the matter is thus regarded in a true historical perspective, the phenomenon of religion without any moral connexions begins to disappear from our picture of primitive man. Whatever religion the savage has is closely connected with whatever morality he has—such is the deeper and more understanding view at which the science of religions has now arrived. Principal Estlin Carpenter gave a useful illustration of this advance to a recognition of the connexion. First he quoted a statement made more than twenty years ago by that very competent observer, Major Ellis, about the Ewe-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast of Africa, to the effect that "religion at the stage of growth at which we find it among these groups of tribes has no connexion with morals or the relations of men to one another." But in 1911 a German missionary, Jacob Spieth (and missionaries are often the best observers), reported "that among the Ewe-speaking folk not only does Mother Earth punish with death those who have sworn falsely, but Mawu, God, who knows the thoughts and hearts of men, who is the giver of everything good upon the earth—very patient and never angry—will not allow one brother to deceive another, or suffer the king to judge unrighteously, or permit one to burn another's house down."[3] Thus the missionary was able to detect a relatively high ethic in a tribal religion where an earlier observer of great acumen

[1] Mr. Malinowski points how even the savage has an individual conscience, distinguishable from his respect for social tradition. See his essay in *Science, Religion and Reality* (ed. Needham), pp. 54 f.

[2] Moore, *op. cit.* p. 64.

[3] J. Estlin Carpenter, *Comparative Religion* (Home University Library), pp. 197 f. The quoted words are those of Carpenter, not of Spieth.

had failed to find any connexion with ethics at all. And this is not the only instance of such an advance in understanding. There has, indeed, been a deeper understanding all along the line in this matter. But as long ago as 1889 Robertson Smith pointed the way. "The indissoluble bond," he wrote, "that unites men to their God is the same bond of blood-fellowship which in early society is the one binding link between man and man, and the one sacred principle of moral obligation." "Even in its rudest forms religion was a moral force." "In ancient society, the religious ideal expressed in the act of social worship and the ethical ideal which governed the conduct of daily life were wholly at one, and all morality—as morality was then understood—was consecrated and enforced by religious motives and sanctions."[1] As a matter of fact, it is not the connexion of religion and morals, but the distinction and separation, that is unknown to primitive minds.[2] It will hardly be denied nowadays by any competent authority that religion and morals were always closely connected.

It is a further question whether this connexion was of such a nature that we can explain the very rise and existence of religious beliefs by means of the intimations of the moral consciousness; for the whole theory of animism, which has had so important a place in anthropological studies, appears to be against such a view. If the animistic theory of primitive religion is correct, it was by a process of speculation that primitive man came to believe in the existence of the spirits which he worshipped; and this has nothing to do with the kind of moral faith which we have been describing.

But the obvious answer to this is that animism is not really a system of religious belief at all. The animism of primitive peoples may, indeed, have arisen as a matter of speculation. But this does not mean that *religious belief* has so arisen. For there is nothing religious about animism in itself. There is nothing religious in the view that the common objects of the world are animated, that the world

[1] W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites* (new ed.), pp. 53, 267. See Estlin Carpenter, *op. cit.* 196 f.

[2] Cf. Irving King, *The Development of Religion*, p. 91.

is peopled by innumerable spirits. Hence a theory which explains the origin of animism does not explain the origin of religion. Spirits are not necessarily supernatural, they are not necessarily gods ; and thus religious belief, or the religious attitude, may be an entirely different thing, and may have an entirely different source, from the animistic belief in spirits. The latter in itself is primitive science, not primitive religion.

Now this view, which naturally occurs to the mind in reply to the " animistic " objection, is precisely the view to which the scientific study of religion has been steadily tending. A very high authority tells us that " animism is not itself a religion, but a kind of primitive philosophy, which dominates not only the religion, but the whole life, of uncivilized peoples." [1] Moreover, recent investigators of various schools have strenuously maintained that the origin of religion has nothing to do with the animistic theory. Not only may the belief in spirits exist apart from religion, but religion may exist without the belief in spirits. According to Durkheim, the leading representative of the " Sociological " school, the original religion was totemism, which is quite independent of the belief in spiritual beings, and depends simply on the conception of *Mana*, a diffused divine force, at once physical and moral, to which the distinctively religious sentiment is directed. A somewhat similar position is maintained by a distinguished investigator who belongs rather to the " Anthropological " school, Mr. R. R. Marett, in his well-known theory of a pre-animistic religion. This highly original writer has long made it his business " to urge students of Comparative Religion not to stop short at animism, but to dig deeper into human nature in their search for the roots of religion " ; and he expresses the view that " most anthropologists of repute would nowadays subscribe to the negative proposition that animism will not suffice as a ' minimum definition of religion.' " [2] Religion existed before animism,

[1] Tiele-Söderblom, *Kompendium der Religionsgeschichte*, 5 Aufl., p. 8.

[2] R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, 2nd ed., p. xxii. His reference here is to Tylor's famous " minimum definition of religion " as " the belief in spiritual beings."

at least in some parts of the world. The animistic theory of the origin of religion is too "intellectualistic," and does not explain religion at all. Like Durkheim, Mr. Marett selects the word *Mana* as more vital—simply "because it comes nearer than any other available term to the bare designation of that positive emotional *value* which is the raw material of religion, and needs only to be *moralized*—to be *identified with goodness*—to become its essence." [1] It is highly interesting to find modern investigators thus tending to trace the origin of religion, not to primitive speculation with its animistic projection, but to a kind of emotional apprehension of religious *value*, which may exist without any belief in spirits at all, and which at any rate must supervene upon animism before animism can become religion and the spirits can be called gods.

As for the idea that the emotion of fear can transform animism into a religion—that the savage begins to propitiate the spirits by worship and offerings because he stands in abject terror of them—such a view of the origin of religion is hopelessly out of date. Almost all authorities would now agree that wherever there is religion, in however primitive a form, there is something more than fear as a motive. Again it was Robertson Smith who pointed the way. "However true it is that savage man feels himself to be surrounded by innumerable dangers which he does not understand, and so personifies as invisible or mysterious enemies of more than human power, it is not true that the attempt to appease these powers is the foundation of religion. . . . It is not with a vague fear of unknown powers, but with a loving reverence for known gods who are knit to their worshippers by strong bonds of kinship, that religion in the only true sense of the word begins." [2]

It is true that recent investigations have tended to distinguish the feeling of "awe" as the most typical thing in primitive religion, and this may seem to be more akin to fear than to trust or moral confidence. But leading

[1] R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion*, p. xxxi (our italics

[2] W. Robertson Smith, *op. cit.* p. 54.

writers are very careful to point out that something like this latter element is quite essential to the " awe " which is to be called religious. After singling out the word " awe," Mr. Marett goes on : " *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor* is only true if we admit wonder, admiration, interest, respect, even love perhaps, to be, no less than fear, essential constituents of this elemental mood." [1] In his view, the feeling of *mana* or supernatural power is not enough in itself to give religion. The moral dimension must be added, before religion can be differentiated from magic. Thus, according to this distinguished writer, all religion, even the most primitive, " is ethical ; inasmuch as it is of its essence to make the worshipper feel a stronger and better man." The primitive man in performing some simple rite, which to us seems absurd, " asserts in so many words that it makes him ' strong ' and ' wise ' and ' glad ' and ' good.' This is not prayer, of course. Yet in a very real sense the savage asks humbly and is answered." [2] All this is entirely against the idea that religion was a product of primitive animistic speculation *plus* the fear in which primitive man stood of those innumerable spirits, and is much nearer to the view that all true religious belief is an outgrowth of the faith-attitude towards the universe.

It is still more significant to find Mr. Marett, with great originality, following up the same view when he comes to deal with that belief in a remote " supreme being " which is found in so many very primitive peoples. It is now well known that among savages in many parts of the world there is found, alongside of the belief in spirits to whom the cult is directed, a belief in a remote personal supreme being who lives in the sky, is not worshipped, and has very little connexion with the daily life of the tribe. These facts may seem to provide the most serious objection to our view of the source of belief in a God. For it might be argued that this primitive belief in a supreme being at least cannot have arisen out of any kind of religious trust or moral necessity, since it has so little practical connexion with life

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 13. [2] *Ibid.* p. 16 footnote, and p. 191.

or religion, but must rather be a product of the speculative and monistic impulse, which would thus be shown to be the real source of belief in God. The most obvious answer to this, however, is that the argument either proves nothing at all or proves too much. *If* it is the case that this primitive belief in a supreme being has no connexion with the actual religious practice and sentiment of the tribe, then it can hardly be regarded as part of the religion of the tribe, or as a *religious* belief at all.[1] Such a being would not be a god, and such a belief would (like the animistic belief) be rather primitive philosophy than primitive religion. This judgment is confirmed by experts. Professor G. F. Moore says: "They are not gods in religion at all, and there is no evidence that they ever were more than they are now."[2] Söderblom says: "Really it is not with a god or gods in the proper sense that we have here to do."[3] As regards the monistic impulse, that view of the matter must also receive a shock from the fact, which Söderblom goes on to point out, that "these beings do not always appear in the singular, but also in the plural."[4] Thus he tells us that when people speak in this connexion of a "primitive monotheism," neither the "mono" nor the "theism" fits the facts.[5] From this point of view the "supreme being" would not be so much a god as a great mysterious medicine-man in the distant past who set things going in the tribe and originated their customs and institutions before going away to live in the sky. On the other hand, however, it cannot be maintained that these beings are *entirely* dissociated, in primitive tribes, from the affairs of daily life. Andrew Lang,[6] who has the great merit of having first drawn the

[1] The following sentence by Bosanquet, written in quite a different connexion, is interesting here: "The existence of a supreme being, as a person external to ourselves and to the world, like a magnified human creature, is not affirmed by the religious consciousness, and if it were known to be a fact, would have no bearing on religion" (*Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 254).

[2] G. F. Moore, *The Birth and Growth of Religions*, p. 92.

[3] Nathan Söderblom, *Das Werden des Gottesglaubens*, p. 151.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 151 f.

[6] Andrew Lang, *The Making of Religion*, 1898 (2nd ed. 1900), especially chs. x.–xiii.

attention of anthropologists to the importance of these phenomena, emphasized the fact that in some parts of the world, at least, the supreme beings have a close connexion with morality. But they also have a certain connexion with the cult; and it is this side that we find Mr. Marett emphasizing, with special reference to certain Australian tribes where the supreme beings are regarded as presiding over the ritual of adolescent initiation. The interesting thing is that Mr. Marett, who thus recognizes the place of these supreme beings in primitive religion, explains them, ultimately, as personifications of the same supernatural "power" which inspires all primitive religion and which the savage believes can make him "good"—"that is, full of vitality and manly qualities, and luck and magical gifts, and whatever else the heart of man craves from a Universe, of which the 'central mystery' perhaps is that those who seek shall find."[1] He sums it up: "The fluctuating doctrinal representation of the godhead is less vital to this type of religion than is the abiding sense of a power that makes for goodness."[2] Thus if these phenomena have any bearing upon our religious problem at all, they appear again to indicate that the primary thing in religious belief is not theoretical speculation, but a practical faith-attitude, a kind of moral conviction or trust, out of which all religious representations and doctrines grew.

Durkheim's investigations are equally interesting in this respect, though his own theory is one that we cannot accept. He is equally decisive in rejecting the fear-theory. "The famous formula *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor* is in no way justified by the facts. The primitive does not regard his gods as foreigners, enemies or thoroughly and necessarily malevolent beings whose favours he must acquire at any price; quite on the contrary, they are rather friends, kindred or natural protectors for him. Are these not the names he gives to the beings of the totemic species? . . . In fine, the sentiments at the root of totemism are those of happy confidence rather than of terror and com-

[1] R. R. Marett, *op. cit.* p. 168. [2] *Ibid.* p. 146.

pression." [1] Durkheim is quite clear that religion in its primitive beginnings as in its higher stages is essentially bound up with the moral consciousness. With regard to primitive man, "if he acts in a certain way towards the totemic beings, it is not only because the forces resident in them are physically redoubtable, but because he feels himself morally obliged to act thus; he has the feeling that he is obeying an imperative, that he is fulfilling a duty. For these sacred beings he has not merely fear, but also respect. . . . So while the totemic principle is a totemic force, it is also a moral power; so we shall see how it easily transforms itself into a divinity properly so-called." "Moreover," he goes on, "there is nothing here which is special to totemism. Even in the most advanced religions, there is scarcely a god who has not kept something of this ambiguity and whose functions are not at once cosmic and moral. At the same time that it is a spiritual discipline, every religion is also a means of enabling men to face the world with greater confidence." [2] That is to say, religion all along the line involves a kind of moral confidence that power and goodness are united in the ultimate nature of things, that the powers on which we depend are powers for good. Another writer who has made a wide study of primitive religion asserts that the common element in all religions cannot be found in any objective content or belief, but "must rather be sought on the psychic side, in the form of some sort of attitude or disposition which can properly be called religious. An examination of all religions," he goes on, "whether of savage or of civilized peoples, reveals in them all an appreciative attitude towards some sort of values." [3] "The first article in every creed," according to Durkheim, "is the belief in salvation by faith." [4]

In thus claiming that recent investigations into primitive religion are far more favourable to our argument than might

[1] Durkheim, *op. cit.* p. 224. It should be remembered that for Durkheim totemism is the most primitive form of religion.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 190.

[3] Irving King, *op. cit.* p. 32.

[4] Durkheim, *op. cit.* p. 416.

have been expected, we must not be supposed to claim that the writers quoted would quite agree with our view of the nature of religion. But at least they support us by showing that the early religious experience of the race was not built upon theoretical beliefs previously formed in a speculative way; that the religious experience was the primary thing, out of which all explicit religious doctrines were evolved; and that this whole experience was closely connected with the moral consciousness and was indeed an apprehension of *value*, of a kind of moral authority and trustworthiness, in the ultimate nature of things. If some of the writers in question themselves hold different views of religion from ours, it is the more significant to find them so far confirming our contention against the kind of objection at present before us. Durkheim holds, of course, a very different view of religion from that which we are endeavouring to unfold. To him "the idea of society is the soul of religion," [1] and he would entirely disallow our general argument. "God and the immortality of the soul," he says casually in one place, "are frequently proven to-day by showing that these beliefs are implied in the fundamental principles of morality; as a matter of fact, they have quite another origin." [2] But he can only speak thus because he does not consider these beliefs to be of the essence of religion at all: to him the belief in a personal God is but a mistaken development of the true idea of God, which is simply human society, and the belief in personal immortality is but a mistaken development of the truly religious idea of the immortality of society. It is impossible here to enter upon that larger controversy with Durkheim, but this need not hinder us from gratefully accepting his testimony that, at least, all genuinely religious belief is closely connected with the moral consciousness, and that the principle which inspires primitive man with religious sentiments is "a moral power."

In any more positive way we need hardly expect to prove our case from the study of primitive religion. Durkheim is doubtless right up to a point in maintaining that in

[1] Durkheim, *op. cit.* p. 419. [2] *Ibid.* p. 59.

the study of religion " primitive civilizations offer privileged cases, because they are simple cases," which therefore " aid us in disengaging the constituent elements of religion " and also " facilitate the explanation of it." [1] Yet this is only one side of the truth. It is a notoriously unsafe assumption that the true nature of a spiritual process can be seen more clearly in its primitive beginnings than in its more highly developed manifestations. Moreover, we know far less about primitive religion than about the higher levels which we can study all around us and (in spite of our unconscious tendency to make false " rationalizations ") in our own hearts. Thus it is quite inevitable, and quite right, that instead of making primitive religion determinative in this region, so vital to us all, we should to a large extent *interpret* primitive religion in the light of our own personal understanding of the truth and reality of religion. De la Saussaye, in dealing with the whole question whether religion and morality were connected in origin, goes so far as to say that the answer " depends entirely on philosophic suppositions," even though he has already admitted that " what is essential is not always primitive." [2] And Durkheim himself confesses : " Our entire study rests upon this postulate that the unanimous sentiment of believers of all times cannot be purely illusory " ; [3] and so he is led to the sociological theory of primitive religion because society is the only god that he believes in himself. He is only doing what we all must do from our own point of view when we endeavour to throw light upon that dusky region of origins. Therefore we shall not expect to be able to *prove* our case from the phenomena of primitive religion, but may be very well content that the phenomena are, at least, so far from being against us.

If, however, we move a little higher up in the scale of religion, where the light is less dusky, we can get much more positive confirmation of our idea of religious belief as a matter of moral faith or trust; and especially at the

[1] Durkheim, *op. cit.* pp. 6 f.
[2] De la Saussaye, *op. cit.* pp. 49 f.
[3] Durkheim, *op. cit.* p. 417.

point where we see polytheism passing into monotheism. Just as some would make primitive speculation the origin of the belief in gods, so they would explain the later belief in *one* God as due to the speculative impulse to reduce the Many to the One and find a monistic view of the universe. But the history of religions does not bear this out. History teaches us that it was rather a matter of moral constraint. In Israel especially we can see polytheism passing through the stage of monolatry to a strict monotheism in a way which makes this clear. The advance to monolatry obviously has nothing to do with the speculative desire for unity, but is a purely practical demand; and through this stage Israel passed to monotheism by a further moral necessity—by the perception that there must be one moral law and order for all races, and therefore one God of all the world. This process was helped especially by the teaching of the prophets, of which it has been said that "because it is ethical it is *monotheistic*." "We to-day may argue," says the same historical writer, "that because there is one God there should be one standard of morality for public and private life, and one law of justice and kindness among men of different creeds and nations. But the historical movement worked in the other direction. Men of true spiritual insight learned first that their God required real service and not coarse sacrifices or magical rites, and then they advanced to the belief that the kingdom of this God of righteousness was not bounded by geographical or tribal limitations."[1] Apparently religious faith advances towards the knowledge that God is one, not by a speculative necessity or a monistic impulse, but simply because faith was all along a matter of moral conviction, and moral values know no limitations of range or territory.

It need not, of course, be denied that in the earlier stages of religion there are elements for which we seem to have left no place. But these earlier stages are not so crucial or so luminous that we need feel ourselves intimidated by the evidence regarding them; and especially since even

[1] Professor W. G. Jordan, in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, p. 89.

Durkheim, with his purely "sociological" theory, and Mr. Marett, with his emphasis on "awe" as the typical temper of primitive religion, are really much nearer to our standpoint than much of what was said on the subject a generation ago. It is, apparently, after all, on something akin to moral trust that religion has always lived and grown and built its essential beliefs.

II

Having dwelt so long on primitive religion, we must now deal with a tendency in present-day thought which links itself to the word "awe" which we have been encountering; and here we come to the second and opposite objection, which complains that we have given a too rationalistic complexion to the knowledge of God, and left out the non-rational factor, so distinctive of religion. We have seen that genuine religious "awe," even in the most primitive peoples, appears to contain always a moral element; and if it contains also a very different element of the uncanny and the mysteriously dreadful, we have felt ourselves unembarrassed by that discovery, since the primitive need not be regarded as normative for our own religion. But there is at the present time a tendency to emphasize that strange element, not simply as an historical fact for the anthropologist, but as a vital part of religion for ourselves which has been unduly overlooked by the theologian.

This tendency has acquired considerable notoriety during the last few years, mainly through Professor Rudolf Otto's book, *The Idea of the Holy*.[1] According to Otto, the idea of the holy, which is so central in religion, contains not only the idea of the morally good, but also another factor, a "non-rational" factor, to which (coining a new word from the Latin *numen*) he gives the name of the "numinous." No conceptual account can be given of this non-rational element: it can only be described in terms of the feelings which it arouses. The feeling aroused by

[1] Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige*, 1917. Our references are to J. W. Harvey's translation from the 9th German edition.

the numinous may, according to Otto, be described as the "creature-feeling," or, again, as the feeling of "*mysterium tremendum*." This, again, he analyses into five elements: the elements of "Awefulness," of "Overpoweringness" (*majestas*), of "Energy" or "Urgency," of the "Wholly Other," and of "Fascination." According to Otto, this element of the numinous runs right through the history of religion, not only in the primitive stage, where he connects himself explicitly with Mr. Marett's views, but in the higher developments as well. The main interest of all this for him is, of course, that he considers the numinous factor to be of the very essence of religion. It is, indeed, he would apparently say, through the feeling of the numinous that we become aware of the very existence of the Divine Subject, of which we may predicate moral attributes.[1] He would not be content to put at the centre of religion any kind of moral faith. "Religion is not in vassalage either to morality or to teleology, '*ethos*' or '*telos*,' and does not draw its life from postulates; and its non-rational content has, no less than its rational, its own independent roots in the hidden depths of the spirit itself."[2] In correspondence with the idea of the holy, Otto sets up the faculty of "divination," which recognizes the holy in its particular outward manifestations; and this faculty, essential to religion, is apparently something more direct than faith. "It is one thing merely to believe in a reality beyond the senses and another to have experience of it also; it is one thing to have ideas of 'the holy' and another to become consciously aware of it as an operative reality, intervening actively in the phenomenal world. Now it is a fundamental conviction of all religions, of religion as such, we may say, that this latter is possible as well as the former. Religion is convinced not only that the holy and sacred reality is attested by the inward voice of conscience and the religious consciousness, the 'still small voice' of the Spirit in the heart, by feeling, presentiment, and longing, but also that it may be directly encountered in particular occurrences and events, self-revealed in persons, and dis-

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 2. [2] *Ibid.* p. 140.

played in actions, in a word, that beside the inner revelation from the Spirit there is an outward revelation of the divine nature." [1] It is by "divination" that this revelation is recognized. Otto's whole view may be regarded as a revolt against the idea that our knowledge of God comes to its own by a kind of moral faith, or an apprehension of absolute values, the true, the beautiful, and the good. Religion is concerned with the *numinous*, which is itself an absolutely distinct value, quite irreducible to these other values. The numinous may, indeed, be "schematized" by moral concepts; but these schematizations convey nothing to those who have not directly experienced the numinous for themselves; and this experience is, of course, an entirely different thing from a moral conviction or trust in an infinite Goodness.

Before we go on to discuss Otto's view, we may note that it is by no means an isolated example of the contemporary tendency which it represents, at least in the matter of separating our religious knowledge of God by a clear gulf from our apprehension of all remaining values. There seems, indeed, at the present time to be a tendency in various quarters to insist upon the absolute separation of God from all that is given in our ordinary experience, and upon the absolutely distinctive character of religious knowledge or faith. The school of Gogarten and Emil Brunner (to which we have already referred as so influential in Germany) is very far removed from Otto's sympathy with mysticism and with Schleiermacher, and yet the extremes meet at certain points. Between faith and everything else in our inner lives there is, according to Brunner, "an *absolutely* unbridgeable gulf." [2] Faith has nothing to do with value-judgments, and the primary thing about the Divine is not its *value* for us but its "overpowering" quality, "compelling recognition as the absolutely valid," with a validity which "is as independent of our valuations as is the multiplication table." [3] The postulate which our

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 147.
[2] E. Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis, und Glaube*, 2 und 3 Aufl., p. 37.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 39, 40.

moral consciousness makes is not enough, it gives a mere possibility. Faith is something absolutely over and above that, and depends on a " Revelation " which speaks to us with unconditional authority. Brunner definitely rejects Otto's conception of the irrational, but he is really at one with Otto in recognizing a kind of revelation of the Divine which is absolutely distinct from all our other values. " That," he says, " is the *mysterium tremendum* before which man bows himself in the dust and thinks of his unclean lips." [1] The name of God means something that lies beyond all analogy, even that of personality, and thus Brunner can speak of " the irrational character of faith." [2] The revolt from the idea of faith as resting on our values is even plainer in Gogarten. " Faith is not faith in God except when it is unfaith in man. Therefore faith cannot be the consequence of the fact that man in the knowledge of the moral law attains to the knowledge of his dignity and value. . . . And faith also cannot be attained by a methodism of the Categorical Imperative." All this would be " a moralistic misunderstanding of faith." [3] Certain traces of the same tendency can be found in Karl Heim's conception of faith, though his view is much more Kantian. The following passage reminds us of Otto's idea that the " numinous " is felt to be " wholly other," and cannot be conceptually described except by negatives, resulting in the " nothing " or the " void " of the mystics. God " never speaks except out of a cloud, so that He Himself remains invisible withal. He is for all objective categories so entirely transcendent, that even the utterance of His name may be felt to be a desecration. The very naming can too easily lead to objectifying Him. If we speak of Him at all, it can only be by the *via negationis*, so that His being is set in antithesis to everything objective, as the ' wholly other.' " [4] Thus faith, while ultimately of an ethical character, is nevertheless a " step into the void." [5] All

[1] E. Brunner, *Erlebnis, Erkenntnis, und Glaube*, 2 und 3 Aufl., pp. 121–4.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 125.
[3] F. Gogarten, *Von Glauben und Offenbarung*, p. 51.
[4] Karl Heim, *Glaubensgewissheit*, 3rd ed., p. 246.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 253.

this, while written from a standpoint quite opposed to that of Otto, yet betrays a kinship with him in the reaction against the tendency to base faith upon our human values. An English book recently published, on *The Non-Rational Character of Faith*, shows a similar reaction; insisting, like Brunner, that "God is not an object within the texture of experience"; pronouncing the conception of God as "the perfection of the Good, the True and the Beautiful in their eternal unity, or as the conserver of the ultimate values that reality reveals as belonging to it," to be "fundamentally wrong"; and protesting that it is false to assign to religion "the purpose of making men good."[1] It is "not through the patience which solves a moral problem, or secures a worldly gain, or unravels an intellectual enigma," that man seeks and finds God; "but rather in a spirit of awe-inspiring humility from which all the moods and all the powers of mind enabling a man to face and conquer the world are absent."[2] Here again there seems to be a hankering after a "wholly other" and sheerly incomprehensible character for the Divine.

With some of this we must all sympathize. It seems, indeed, almost certain that this whole tendency represents a natural and salutary reaction from certain false notes or expressions in the "moralistic" view of faith which connects it essentially with our moral convictions and absolute values. The complacent "rationalism" from which Otto revolts is no more satisfying to ourselves than it is to him. But it is a further question whether he has taken the right way of emphasizing and describing that element of transcendent mystery in religion which we must all be eager to acknowledge; and we must now examine his statement.

The *prima facie* strength of Otto's whole contention lies, of course, in its apparent harmony with the findings of the anthropological study of religion. The element of "awefulness" which he finds in the numinous connects itself naturally with the "awe" which anthropologists find to be everywhere the raw material of religion; and his con-

[1] E. E. Thomas, *The Non-Rational Character of Faith*, pp. 43, 20, 77.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 115.

tention that the " holy " has always historically meant something more than the morally perfect is, no doubt, in line with the conclusions of scholars during, at least, the last generation. So far there is nothing new, and nothing precarious. But as one reads Otto's book, one is repeatedly troubled by the feeling that in working out his own theory he is really endeavouring to restore to religion an element which it is the very glory of religion to have been gradually eliminating through all the ages of its progress from lower to higher.[1] It is not at all difficult to point out the " numinous " in primitive religion. It is not at all difficult to show that the idea of holiness, which was so prominent in the religion of Israel, contained an entirely non-ethical element which inspired in the worshipper a feeling of eerie awe. But surely one of the great lessons learned and taught by the prophets was that the holiness God really cared for was quite inseparable from moral goodness. And when we come to the religion of Jesus in the Gospels, the non-ethical element of numinous awe seems still farther to seek. Otto has a chapter on " The Numinous in the New Testament," with a few pages on Jesus ; but in these pages he seems to make a singularly poor case. He speaks of the " mystery " of the kingdom in Jesus' teaching, and of " Hallowed be thy name " in the Lord's Prayer, and of " him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," and of the agony in Gethsemane ; but in every case the " numinous " interpretation seems arbitrary. Otto admits that in Jesus' teaching about God the " fatherhood " is more prominent than the " holiness," but he argues that it was because there was no need to teach the latter to the Jews of His time.[2] But does not an unbiased reading of the Synoptic Gospels rather give one the impression that the very point of Jesus' teaching was, not indeed to banish mystery and godly fear (far from it !), but yet to free religion from the

[1] It is a remarkable fact that most of the terms which Otto uses in his analysis of numinous feeling are drawn from ancient languages, or from regions which we should not now associate with religion at all (*mysterium tremendum, σεβαστός, augustus, " erschauern," " grausen," " grässlich," majestas, stupor, δεινός, " das Ungeheuere "*).

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 85–8.

" numinous " element with its taboos and its false emphasis, and to exalt faith and love instead? Dr. McGiffert, in a purely historical study, points it out as a remarkable fact that whereas " the holiness of God was constantly emphasized " in Jewish religion, and " The Holy One " is the most frequent name for God in Rabbinic literature, " so far as our sources show God was not once spoken of by Jesus as holy. The conception of holiness, indeed, is almost, if not altogether, wanting in the words of Jesus." [1] Another writer in this connexion says: " God the Father was not ' holy ' to Jesus in the Rabbinical sense, for the very reason that his God was approachable." [2] As regards religious awe, Dr. Glover remarks that " there is not the rather artificial awe about his [Jesus'] voice when he speaks of God that some teachers have affected. It is because he is more genuine than they, and has a stronger instinct for reality. Religion with him is spontaneous and natural intercourse with God. Much ancient religion, and a good deal that goes by the name to-day, we can only call taboo." [3] Whether we agree altogether with Dr. Glover or not, there is surely a good deal in Otto's idea of the holy that we should indeed reject as belonging to those realms of taboo which religion has been gradually outgrowing as it became more ethical.

Otto himself, of course, recognizes that " this process of rationalization and moralization of the numinous, as it grows ever more clear and more potent, is in fact the most essential part of what we call ' Sacred History ' and prize as the ever-growing self-revelation of the Divine." But this does not mean a suppression of the numinous, but rather " the completion and charging of it with a new content." [4] It is exceedingly difficult to understand what this signifies. Sometimes Otto seems to mean simply that the numinous, as such, is always in religion the ultimate sub-

[1] A. C. McGiffert, *The God of the Early Christians*, pp. 19 f.

[2] Professor A. M. Dulles, in a review of McGiffert's book, in *Auburn Seminary Record*, vol. xx. p. 232.

[3] T. R. Glover, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, pp. 143 f.

[4] Otto, *op. cit.* p. 115.

ject, to which moral qualities may afterwards be added as predicates in the course of religious progress.[1] If it be asked by what means we thus come to know that the numinous subject has these moral qualities, that the Divine is good and is the guardian of justice, Otto's answer is that this connexion of the numinous and the morally good is, not indeed a connexion of *logical* necessity, yet a necessary and *a priori* connexion. Thus the fact that the numinous (*i.e.* God) is good, is "axiomatic" or "self-evident," though not at first realized.[2] Here we are getting into deeper and deeper waters. What is meant by an *axiomatic* connexion between two ultimate and simple ideas, such as Otto considers the morally good and the numinous to be, utterly distinct from each other and having no logically necessary connexion — one of them, moreover, being "rational" and the other "non-rational"? This is surely a case of mere words without meaning. But Otto is "forced to assume" such an unthinkable connexion, simply because he started out with the numinous, which has to be somehow moralized.[3] Do not the facts straighten themselves out much more satisfactorily if we conclude that there is no such distinct category of value as the numinous at all, *alongside* of the true, the beautiful, and the good? Man did not first apprehend God through a feeling for the numinous, and afterwards come to attribute these other values to Him: it was rather through his apprehension of these values as at the heart of reality—and above all, of moral values as crowning and embracing the others—that man ever came to have a God at all. Even the gods of primitive man, as we have seen, were closely connected with his moral consciousness, such as it was. It cannot be maintained that "holiness," as including a purely non-

[1] Otto, *op. cit.* p. 2. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 140 f.

[3] The following words of Mr. R. G. Collingwood's about the "moralisation of religion," written before Otto's book had appeared, seem relevant: "The word 'moralisation' is the real difficulty. If a thing has at the outset nothing to do with morality, no jugglery or alchemy will bring it into relation with the moral consciousness. You cannot arbitrarily impose a category on a thing which is unfitted to receive it" (*Religion and Philosophy*, (1916), p. 24).

ethical and numinous element, gave the tone to religion as distinct from morality. For such "holiness" formed part of the primitive morality, without any distinction. The worshipper had to be holy in all sorts of ceremonial ways which we should call mere taboos, just as his god was holy. There was no distinction between what we should distinguish as the ceremonial and the moral requirements. To primitive man both were part of one homogeneous system, which was ethics and religion together. Gradually men's ethical insight deepened, and ethics began to discard those elements that were merely taboos, and to heighten the elements that were really of ethical value. And, at the same time, men came gradually to think of God as not holy in a "numinous" sense, but just and loving and good, though in ways beyond our imagination. The religious sanction came to be transferred from all sorts of mysterious requirements of holiness to the real requirements of the moral consciousness, and the vision of God came to be promised, not to people with some uncanny gift of "divining the numinous," but to the pure in heart.

Sometimes, however, Otto seems to mean, not that moral attributes come to be *added* to the numinous (divine) Subject as religion progresses, but that moral concepts, which are rational, are used to "*schematize*" the numinous, which is non-rational, so that the qualities of goodness, justice, kindness, as applied to God, are but moral (and thus rational) schemata of His numinous (and thus non-rational) attributes.[1] But if the numinous is an absolutely distinct kind of value from the moral, what is meant by saying that it is schematized by the latter? And why should it require such a moral *schema* for its expression? Because it is "non-rational"? But though Otto makes merry over the loose way in which that term is often used,[2] he never really succeeds in making clear what he means by it himself. Most commonly he seems to mean that whatever is simple, unique, irreducible, indefinable, is non-rational.[3]

[1] Otto, *op. cit.* pp. 6, 46 ff., 144 ff. [2] *Ibid.* p. 60.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 1 ff., 7. Otto's confusion here is pointed out in an acute

But then the æsthetic and the moral, as well as the numinous, ought to be non-rational for Otto, since he regards each of these also as a unique and ultimate category which cannot be derived from anything else.[1] In one place he definitely places the numinous as a category of value alongside of these other (moral and æsthetic) categories of value, and speaks of them all alike as being furnished *a priori* by " a ' pure reason ' in the profoundest sense." [2] It seems as if all these ultimate values were, for Otto's own theory, in precisely the same position so far as rationality or non-rationality is concerned. But this makes the conception of schematization still more difficult, and indeed seems altogether to stultify the hypothesis of an absolutely distinct category of value called the " numinous."

Surely Otto's protest against religious " rationalism " can be sustained, and the deep truths after which he is striving can be conserved, without his own very difficult and dangerous theory. It is, indeed, vital to remember that there must always be a large element of sheer mystery in religion, surrounding whatever utterances we make about the Divine, and that even these utterances are but symbolical hints at something which can never be fully expressed in words or comprehended by the human mind. Of this we have already made ample acknowledgment ; and without this acknowledgment of mystery, religion would be immeasurably poorer, if not altogether bankrupt. And yet mystery itself has nothing essentially religious about it. Religion only begins when in the heart of the mystery faith discerns our highest *values* ; and not any " numinous " values, but our moral values in the widest sense of the term ; assuring us that at the centre of all things is a Perfection of which all our human ideals are symbols and shadows. It is surely a dangerous thing to say that, apart from these noblest realities of our lives altogether, we could

criticism, which I have found very instructive, by Leonard Hodgson, *The Place of Reason in Christian Apologetic*, pp. 7 ff.

[1] See especially pp. 5 and 8 of Otto for the æsthetic, and p. 44 for the ethical.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 117 f.

have an immediate religious feeling of God as a numinous Subject, to which we may afterwards add moral attributes. "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne";[1] and it is because we are sure of these moral realities that we can find our way to His throne at all amid the clouds of mystery. "Rationalists" may make the mistake of applying our moral categories to God in a too complacent way, and imagining they have fully comprehended His nature in their explications of "the divine attributes." Nothing is drearier than that; and thus they need to be reminded that moral qualities cannot mean precisely the same in God as they do in us, and that we cannot imagine what personality or the moral life would mean in an infinite and perfect Being. This is, indeed, a very vital truth, which religion itself has always realized and has frequently expressed: that all we say about God is anthropomorphically symbolic, since all human thought and language are inadequate for the comprehension of the Divine.[2] Thus when we apply our highest values of the beautiful and the good to God, we raise them to the absolute and perfect pitch, and they become something which we cannot imagine at all. This is where the mystery of religion comes in, and to forget it would be quite fatal. But Otto is not content with this kind of mystery. Even the notion of absolute goodness, etc., though it carries us beyond anything that we can think out coherently, is for Otto but a rational *schema* of something utterly non-rational and "wholly other" in the Divine, an absolutely mysterious something which can only be apprehended by the quite distinct and separate feeling for the "numinous."[3] This is where we cannot follow him. The element of mystery is essential, but it seems equally essential to insist that our only positive clue amid the mystery lies not in an uncanny revelation of

[1] Ps. 97^2.

[2] See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* part i. qq. 1–12 (summarized by G. Tyrrell, *Lex Orandi*, pp. 80 ff.); Schleiermacher, *Der Christliche Glaube*, §5, Zusatz; Baron von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (1st series), pp. 39, 71.

[3] *Op. cit.* pp. 145 f.

the numinous, but in those moral realities and values of our human life which present themselves as the true, though symbolic and incomplete, revelations of God. It is only by following out these values as far as we can, that we come to have any knowledge of God at all, or rather, come to realize and develop that elemental knowledge of God which expresses itself partially through the moral consciousness.

It does, of course, seem dangerous to speak as if religion were dependent on morality, and faith dependent on moral faithfulness, since the very discovery made by Christianity is that moral faithfulness depends on faith. And it would indeed be hopeless to think of faith as something which in our moral lives we *achieve*, when what we really need in our religion is a supernatural helping hand stretched down to us in our moral helplessness. It has been said that " Philo's faith is the righteousness of the righteous, Paul's is the righteousness of the ungodly " ; [1] and it is the latter that we need. Faith must, indeed, as we insisted in an earlier chapter, be the gift of God. But why should it be any less His gift because it comes through Conscience, which is His voice, and comes only to those who sincerely hearken to that voice ? We are indeed dependent for moral victory on the grace that we receive through faith. Yet at the same time the highest religion has always recognized that this faith is morally conditioned. It can only come to the morally earnest and honest, to those who really desire the divine grace which gives moral victory. " How can ye believe, who receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour that cometh from the only God ? " There is surely no danger in recognizing this. In Otto's view, on the other hand, there does appear to be a really serious danger : that of making the knowledge of God depend, not on purity of heart and honesty of purpose, but on some strange " psychic " gift, some occult, uncanny power of divination, which may belong to some men and not to others, quite apart from any ethical conditions.[2] Otto criticizes Schleier-

[1] Schlatter, *Der Glaube im N.T.*, 3rd ed., p. 82.

[2] Otto makes a distinction between the general feeling for the numinous, and the " divination " which can detect the numinous in its mani-

macher for assuming this faculty of divination to be a universal one, and argues that while it is indeed " a universal potentiality of man as such," it is not actually present even in all men of " religious conviction " ; but only in " special divinatory natures." [1] Thus it seems to become a matter of temperament, not of the pure heart and the will to do God's will. With regard to those people who do not possess the gift of divining the numinous, an acute critic remarks that Otto " does not discuss the question whether or no they can be Christians." [2] But it seems plain that, according to Otto, it is only by such " divination " that any one can come to appreciate Jesus Christ in the Christian way.[3] Yet he regards it as questionable whether even Schleiermacher (that deeply religious and Christian soul) was really a divinatory nature, though it was he that rediscovered the faculty ; and regards it as certain that in this respect he was at least decidedly inferior to Goethe, though the divination of the latter is admitted to have been on a low and pagan level.[4] Surely it is very questionable whether this strange gift, with all it stands for, has any essential connexion with religion at all, or any kinship with the real knowledge of God.

III

We may usefully bring the inquiries of this chapter to a head if we now ask : What is the relation between the faith that we have been describing and the mystical knowledge of God upon which mystics have loved to dwell ? This is but to endeavour to do justice to the facts of which Otto's theory appears to be a misinterpretation, and to come to terms with all who may feel that in our account of faith we have hardly left room for anything that can be called a direct mystical experience of God at all.

It is impossible in this place to deal with the whole

festations in the phenomenal world. But it is difficult to see how he can avoid making the latter as essential to religion as the former. See our comments below.

[1] *Op. cit.* pp. 153 f.
[2] L. Hodgson, *op. cit.* p. 12.
[3] Otto, *op. cit.*, chs. xix. and xx.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 154 ff.

question of mysticism, even if the author were equal to such a task. But it only seems necessary to point out that what we have been venturing in this study to do is not to reduce the mystical experience or knowledge or vision of God to a mere inferential judgment or a moral postulate (we have already safeguarded against that), or even to *explain* it (for it cannot ultimately be explained), but simply to lay bare its inner principle and to indicate the conditions of its growth; and that these moral conditions are precisely those which the truest mystics have always emphasized themselves in their jealousy for true religion. As regards actual "visions," it is well known that, while most of the great mystics experienced them, they did not attach great importance to them, but were keenly aware of the danger of doing so.[1] Baron von Hügel points out how St. Theresa refused to accept her visions as authentic without any test, and how her great test was "the spiritual content and effects of such experiences" in rooting out her faults and implanting virtues. "This doctrine," he says, "is still the last word of wisdom in these matters."[2] There need be no hesitation in recognizing that for certain temperaments faith embodies itself in these quasi-sensible forms: in the light of modern psychology this is not more embarrassing to our view of faith than to any other. But it is highly significant when the mystics themselves, and the authoritative writers on mysticism, can be found virtually maintaining that the authority of these visions is dependent on the authority of the moral consciousness. Quite apart, however, from visions, the great mystics have always been eager to maintain that the whole mystical knowledge of God is morally conditioned. This is, indeed, well known to be one of the very first principles of mysticism, that only the pure in heart can see God, and that "sensuality and selfishness are absolute disqualifications."[3] Moreover, there

[1] W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 14–20; R. H. Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, p. 73.

[2] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 2nd ed., vol. ii. pp. 48 f.

[3] These are the words of Dean Inge, who, in his authoritative book on *Christian Mysticism*, brought out this fundamental principle of the moral conditions of all mystical knowledge of God. See pp. 7 f.

seems to be in some of the greatest Christian mystics an almost startlingly ethical strain, which simply refuses to admit any other knowledge of God than that which comes through, and expresses itself in, the Christianized moral consciousness and moral life. "All visions, revelations, and heavenly feelings," wrote St. John of the Cross, "and whatever is greater than these, are not worth the least act of humility, bearing the fruits of that charity which neither values nor seeks itself, which thinketh well, not of self, but of all others." "One desire only does God allow and suffer in His presence: that of perfectly observing His law and of carrying the Cross of Christ. In the Ark of the Covenant there was but the Book of the Law, the Rod of Aaron, and the Pot of Manna. Even so that soul, which has no other aim than the perfect observance of the Law of God and the carrying of the Cross of Christ, will be a true Ark containing the true Manna, which is God." [1]

But we need not go to the Spanish saints. We may go to the most mystical writer in the New Testament, and learn from him more clearly than from anyone else to distrust every kind of mystical vision or union that is not closely connected with simple human goodness and love. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him." "He that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him." "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." "No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one

[1] Quoted from St. John of the Cross by Baron von Hügel (*Mystical Element*, vol. ii. p. 51).

another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us." [1] Such passages do not give much encouragement to the idea that religion requires, or is enriched by, a special faculty of divination exercised by a select few, quite apart from the convictions and aspirations of the moral life.

The true mystic is, of course, always eager to distinguish religion from "mere morality"; and in the interests of this distinction we find Baron von Hügel pointing out, as a fact which is more than accidental, that the men who have a keen religious sense are not always identical with those who have a keen moral sense and practice.[2] We have ourselves had occasion to note how common is the tragedy of a morally earnest man failing to rise into the active possession of the faith that is in him, because religion has been presented to him in a form in which he cannot recognize it; while men of far less moral earnestness do, nevertheless, in a more favourable environment, hear and recognize the voice of God. Perhaps such an explanation would not have satisfied the Baron. But even this great student and lover of mysticism was quite clear that there was no such thing as a "distinct faculty of mystical apprehension," "a specifically distinct, self-sufficing, purely mystical mode of apprehending reality"; and that "all the errors of the Exclusive Mystic proceed precisely from the contention that Mysticism does constitute such an entirely separate, completely self-supported kind of human experience." The true full dignity of Mysticism, he wrote, "consists precisely in being, not everything in any one soul, but something in every soul of man." [3] The true mystic, again, like the true evangelical (and are they not the same?), must certainly reject any view that would make faith or the apprehension of God anything like a mere moral achievement; for it must be all of God, who saves us from our sins by His grace through faith, "and that not of ourselves." "And yet, here too," wrote Baron von Hügel, thinking of the human and moral

[1] 1 John $2^{9f.}$ $3^{17ff.}$ ^{24} $4^{7f.}$ ^{12}.

[2] *Mystical Element*, vol. ii. p. 274.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. pp. 283 f.

conditions, "it is doubtless deeply important to remember, and to act in accordance with, the great truth that God Himself is apprehended by us only if there be action of our own, and that, from elementary moral dispositions right up to consummate sanctity, the whole man has ever to act and will more and more manysidedly, fully, and persistently." [1] Religion is, indeed, more than morality, and the life of faith is more than the life of ideals. Yet true faith—or the true knowledge of God—can only realize itself in us as we follow these ideals. It is in them, as in a glass darkly, that we can see the God whose presence in us created them for us and inspired us to seek them as the images of Himself.

A particularly noble statement of these deep facts of the religious life—of the knowledge of God as distinct and yet conditioned—is found in a beautiful passage by "that born mystic," George Tyrrell. He is quite clear that the "religious sense" is "something distinct from the moral, the scientific, the æsthetic 'sense'; and even from the combination of all three in what we might call the 'sense of the Ideal' or of the Divine." And yet the religious sense is not something alongside of the others. It is rather related to them "as the soul is related to the body." "The sense of the Absolute is given not *beside*, but *in* and *with* and *through* the sense of the Ideal in every department." It is the sense "of that which draws us to the centre of a sphere whose surface we must traverse for ever in pursuit of the Ideal." "In the Ideal, in the True, the Good and the Fair, we have the Finite variously transfused and transfigured by the rays of the Infinite, forcing upon us the conception of an illuminating source beyond, whose precise form and nature lies shrouded in mystery." "It is then the function of religion to discern and make explicit that confused sense of the Absolute which is implicit and presupposed in the spontaneous and sincere pursuit of the Ideal; to bring forward and foster that subconscious love of God which is involved in the conscious love of that which

[1] *Mystical Element*, vol. ii. p. 286. I do not, of course, wish to suggest that this great thinker would have agreed with our whole argument.

God wills." [1] Religion gives us, indeed, something far more than the pursuit of the Ideal, for religion gives us God ; and yet, only in pursuing the Ideal can we ever have any knowledge of God at all.

This is the knowledge of God which religious men call *faith*, and whose nature and conditions we have been endeavouring to describe. To base it upon a separate religious instinct or mystical faculty or specific "value," quite independent of our moral ideals, would be to degrade and impoverish it, to make its rise in the soul too fortuitous, to narrow its range and the basis of its certainty. But to connect it with the moral consciousness, with the life of ideals, of duty, and of love, is to exalt and ennoble it, giving it the highest place and the broadest basis conceivable, giving it the richest as well as the purest content. For the moral life leaves out nothing that is good, it claims every instinct for its raw material, and every value for its treasury ; it embraces the whole man, asserting a higher authority than all other interests and unifying them all. At the same time, this moral life, this life of ideals, cannot be content with itself, but points us to something beyond, or perhaps underneath and behind it, yet quite inseparable from it and even inclusive of it ; and the more loyal we are to these ideals, for their own sake, the more do we become conscious and sure of that ultimate meaning which transforms morality for us and yet can only be represented symbolically through the values or ideals of our moral lives raised to the absolute degree : that is, religion. God is what we really desire in every simple, spontaneous, disinterested choice of the ideal in our daily lives. God is what we really love whenever we truly love our fellows. God is what we dimly know, even in apprehending our duty in the commonplace details of practice. But the more we live ourselves into the ideal, in a daily life of duty and love, the clearer becomes

[1] G. Tyrrell, *Lex Orandi*, pp. xi–xxvi. Tyrrell assumes that "there can, of course, be no more question of a separate religious 'faculty' in the old sense, than of a separate moral faculty." It is only "for convenience of thought" that he speaks of a "religious sense," meaning a distinct apprehension and interest of our spiritual nature which cannot be reduced to anything else.

our conscious knowledge of God, in which alone we can rest, and which alone, in its turn, can empower us to realize the ideal. And this is more than morality : this is religion.

It is a real knowledge of God—more real than any other knowledge we have. Yet it has also to be characterized as *faith*. For it can never see each step of its way, or escape from contradiction. When we endeavour to think it out, as we must needs do, we lose ourselves in paradox. We raise our human values and ideals to the point of infinite perfection, as our one clue to the Divine ; but our imaginations cannot follow them. Then our baffled minds realize that their highest ideas about God can be no more than symbolic of an Ineffable Reality whose " ways are past finding out," but whose meaning we can yet trust as better than the best we can conceive. We do not know the method of this Divine Love in any detail. But we know whom we have trusted, and are persuaded that He is able to keep what we have committed to Him. This is the kind of knowledge that is called faith ; and it is only " by faith " (and again, to revert to the primary moral condition, as we find it in the same passage, it is only by " being rooted and grounded in love ") that we can " know that which passeth knowledge " and " be filled with all the fulness of God."

PART II

CHRISTIAN FAITH

CHAPTER VII

FAITH AND THE HISTORICAL JESUS

SYNOPSIS

How can the faith we have been describing be dependent on the story of Jesus ?

I. The difficulty (which, as we shall see, is *twofold*) was classically expressed by Lessing : " Contingent truths of history can never be made the proof of necessary truths of reason." What shall we say to this ?

II. Let us remember that (according to our general argument) the truths of faith are not " necessary truths of reason " in Lessing's sense ; that they cannot be *proved* at all, either in his sense or in that of his orthodox opponents ; that nevertheless the germ of faith, as we have described it, in each man's heart, is *very largely dependent for its growth on the " revelation "* which comes to him from past generations of believers ; and that this revelation can never be adequately expressed in *words* at all, but only in *personality*. This helps us to see how faith *needs* just such a supreme historical revelation or Incarnation of the Divine as Christianity offers when it sets Jesus Christ before us as a Supreme Believer ; and so the first difficulty is solved.

III. But how can faith *afford* to depend on an episode which may have doubt cast on it by historical criticism ? Can we solve this problem by sacrificing actual *history* and accepting the Gospel story merely as an indispensable *symbol* ? Most certainly not. Is faith, then, to be left at the mercy of the historical critic ? The truth rather is that without faith no man can be a good historian of religious matters. Thus Christian faith does not really base itself on an historical proof achieved by cool critical methods alone. The historical certainty rather *depends on the faith*, in the sense that the historical fact of Jesus becomes certain to us in kindling our faith in God, and so it becomes a very central part of our faith to believe that God supremely manifested Himself, and supremely seeks us, in the historical Jesus.

IV. This is *faith in God through Jesus Christ* ; and the *faith in Christ* which we find so prominent in the New Testament is not something different or additional. God is the ultimate object of faith, but it is *God in Christ*. (Many New Testament scholars can be quoted in support of this, most interestingly Deissmann.)

V. But is this the *historical Jesus*, a figure in the distant past, or the present and *living Christ* ? It was to meet this kind of difficulty that those marvellous passages were written in the Fourth Gospel about the living spiritual presence that would be with Christ's people after His own departure. In these passages there is a strange mingling of ideas : sometimes it is the Father that is going to remain for ever in and with the believers, sometimes it is the Living Christ, sometimes it is the Holy Spirit, and all these seem to be but different ways of describing the same experience. The fundamental truth seems to be that our Christian faith in God depends utterly on the story of Jesus, and yet not in any mechanical way which would leave us at a hopeless disadvantage as compared with those who were eye-witnesses, since through that story the Living Divine Spirit that was manifested in Jesus can work in our own hearts and kindle our faith in Himself.

CHAPTER VII

Faith and the Historical Jesus

Hitherto we have been dealing with faith in general, but now we come to Christian faith in particular. In the foregoing discussion we have, indeed, frequently used material from the realm of Christian faith to illustrate and enforce our argument, since it is natural to turn for general guidance in our study to the type of faith with which we are most familiar and which we hold to be the highest and purest. But now we must turn to the special study of this Christian consummation. To embark upon it in detail would, of course, be to involve ourselves in the whole task, not only of Christology, but of Christian theology. But all we have to do in this place is to endeavour to see whether it is possible, on the basis of the general principles that we have been explicating, to do justice to the special position claimed by Christian faith.

The first thing which must occur to us in this connexion is that among Christians faith claims to have a very special and essential relation to a Person who appeared in history and appears to us in historical records—Jesus Christ. But how can the faith whose general nature and basis we have been exhibiting have any essential connexion with such an historical figure? Or how can our faith in God afford to be bound up with an episode in ancient history, which may have doubt cast upon it by impartial historical criticism? Such are the questions that have given rise to the large amount of literature on "Faith and History" with which the modern theological world is burdened; and we must give them a brief consideration.

I

Bernard Bosanquet, the philosopher, tells us of an early experience which is full of suggestion for our present purpose. At the period when he was just beginning to reflect critically on the New Testament narrative, he was persuaded to go and hear Dr. Moorhouse, afterwards Bishop of Manchester, delivering apparently an apologetical lecture. "After discussing some of the current criticisms on the New Testament story, the preacher broke forth with extreme emotion: 'But what are all these reasonings to me? I *know* that these things are true.' I left the chapel," says Bosanquet, "with two convictions firmly fixed in my mind. . . . The first was that such a speaker evidently had hold of an experience which brought him strength and inspiration. The second was that this experience could not conceivably be what he seemed to me to identify it with, namely, an assurance that certain events in history had actually taken place." [1] That reminiscence is an admirable illustration of the whole difficulty with which the modern religious world has felt itself to be confronted in this matter: the difficulty of letting religious faith be bound up with historical judgments. "It must always," wrote Johannes Weiss, "be designated a fateful thing that the same word [*Glaube*, 'faith,' 'belief'], which can and should have so much deeper a religious meaning, serves at the same time to designate the acceptance of stories, which in itself may not be accompanied by any religious feeling or willing." [2] Not that Christian thought has ever really been guilty of identifying faith with a mere belief in the Gospel story. That, indeed, is a confusion against which the Reformers made express provision.[3] Nevertheless, the "saving faith," which they so zealously distinguished from the mere acceptance of historical statements in the creeds, was entirely bound up with such

[1] See *Contemporary British Philosophy* (1st series), pp. 53 ff.

[2] J. Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*, p. 324.

[3] See Otto Kirn, *Glaube und Geschichte*, p. 4. In writing these opening pages I owe a good deal to this excellent monograph.

acceptance, and would have been meaningless apart from it. This provided no difficulty for the Reformers. It was the thinkers of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century that first began to feel the need of separating religious truth from historical fact, and thus to evolve the idea of religion without history. It is often said that this but betrayed their lack of the historical sense and temper; but Troeltsch assures us that this defect of the Enlightenment period, which has become so notorious, is purely legendary, and that it was in that period that historical thinking really began.[1] However that may be, it was certainly the eighteenth century that became aware of those difficulties of the relation of faith to history with which religious thought has never since ceased to be occupied; and the classic formulation of them is found in Lessing's famous dictum: "Contingent truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason."

This general problem arises from two considerations which have been clearly distinguished from each other. In the first place, there is the consideration that alleged events in ancient history can never be so absolutely *certain* as to be a safe basis for religious faith. This thought is peculiarly characteristic of the modern world, and was an inevitable result of that awakening of historical criticism which began in the eighteenth century. When the whole narrative of the Bible was accepted without question, this aspect of the problem could not appear at all. But when even the Gospel story came to be recognized as subject to historical criticism, the difficulty was bound to be felt; not so much because the Gospels were held to be particularly untrustworthy as historical documents, as because they *were* historical documents, and the events recorded in them therefore inevitably subject to question from an historical point of view. Professor Otto Kirn illustrates this by referring to Lessing's remark that not even such undisputed facts of history as the life and conquests of Alexander the Great are sufficiently certain to be made the foundation of

[1] Ernst Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 745.

anything so vital as our religious faith.[1] From this point of view, nothing in past history could conceivably be fit to bear such a weight, because historical judgments at the best, in their very nature, can never have anything more than a very high degree of probability, whereas religious faith must have certainty. With the spread of the spirit of historical criticism this has become for Christian faith a very real difficulty. How can the religious faith by which we all live, wise and simple, be safely based upon or bound up with anything that is so much at the mercy of historical criticism as any story of ancient events must necessarily be? Must not the scientific historian have the last word on any question regarding an alleged event in history? And how can the faith of the ordinary man be content to wait upon the conclusions of the learned historian?

But there has been another and even deeper reason for contending that faith cannot rest on history. Quite apart from any question of certainty or uncertainty, it has often been felt that the historical should never, and need never, be used to prove the truths of faith, because the latter in their very nature are eternally true, with a truth which the mind can grasp directly, and would only be degraded by being based upon any historical episode. This may seem to leave faith safe and sound, high and dry, and so to obviate our first difficulty altogether. But this will only provide fresh perplexity for many who feel that their Christian faith has an intimate relation to the historic Jesus. And this is perhaps the difficulty that will most readily occur to those who have followed our argument through the preceding chapters. We have exhibited faith as a conviction which grows up in our hearts as we seek to be true to our highest values. As we listen to the voice of conscience it becomes the voice of God; our conviction of the ideal becomes a conviction of God; and such a conviction (which is but reason in its highest exercise), such a faith, thought out and lived out to its conclusion, develops into all the fulness of the Christian conception of God. That has been the trend of our argument. But, then, where does the

[1] Otto Kirn, *op. cit.* p. 9.

historical revelation through Jesus Christ come in? Can the essential conclusions of Christian faith be reached without the Gospel story as a premiss? Is Christian faith but the consummation of faith in general, without any indispensable foothold in Gospel history? Is it but a completer grasp of those eternal truths which the religious mind of man can always receive directly from the Spirit of God? Is not Jesus Christ a vital part of the proof? These are very living questions in the modern world. Having on the one hand felt the uncertainty of historical judgments, some are inclined to welcome this other consideration, that faith does not need history for a foundation and does not want it. But can Christian faith be satisfied with such an account of itself? And is such a view the natural result of our general argument? Are we to agree that "contingent truths of history can never be made the proof of necessary truths of reason?" Let us consider.

II

To begin with, let us remember that, according to our argument, though faith is indeed but reason in its highest exercise, yet the truths of faith are not "necessary truths of reason" in the sense which that phrase conveyed to Lessing and his contemporaries. To the men of the Enlightenment, to prove the truths of religion by reason meant for the most part to demonstrate the existence of God by the three famous traditional "proofs," and this is just the kind of thing that we saw to be alien to the real nature of faith's argument. But further, we found that the very idea of "proving" the truths of faith was a mistaken one. In this respect the conception of faith that has been worked out in the foregoing pages is very different from the conception entertained by either Lessing or his opponents when he wrote that famous sentence. If Lessing was fain to prove religious truths by general principles of reason, the apologetic to which he was opposed was accustomed to prove them by a reference to the miracles which accompanied the inception of Christianity and were

supposed to be its guarantee. But in that sense we have no desire to base faith on history, with Lessing's orthodox opponents, as we have no desire to base it on "reason" with Lessing himself. Faith, we have seen, is not a thing that can be *proved*, by any kind of impartial demonstration, to everybody of normal intelligence, or even to the acutest intelligence, apart from moral conditions. It is a kind of insight which depends less upon powers of reasoning than upon loyalty to conscience, and in that sense it cannot be "proved" at all. Thus we need not hesitate to agree that alleged events in history can never "be made the proof" of our faith.

But this does not exclude a deeper way of basing our faith on history. For, let us remember next, that while faith's argument is one that can arise in germ in the heart of every true man, yet each man cannot (so we saw) work out a full and mature system of belief for himself, unaided, from the beginning. Such an idea, indeed, would be nothing less than ridiculous. Each man is very largely dependent on what is presented to him as the fruit of past ages of faith and the work of faith's great exponents. This comes to him, we saw, as a veritable "revelation": a revelation, indeed, which is itself, on the human side, a product of faith, and is therefore self-authenticating to faith, not needing to be supported by any extrinsic proofs or any external authority; but yet a revelation, giving to the individual a world of truth which he could never have evolved for himself in his lifetime out of his own inner consciousness. And then let us add another important fact which we have repeatedly noted: that the truths of faith are such as can never be fully conveyed in words at all. The very best words which we can find to express our faith are but poor, crude approximations to what we mean. When we think out religion in human terms we find ourselves involved in hopeless contradictions; which indicates that, as we saw, our terms are but symbolic of an ineffable reality which can only be apprehended in the actual experience of religious faith. Thus religion can never be summed up in a system of dogmas. But then how can the fruit of past

ages of faith be communicated to us as a "revelation"? The words of inherited dogma must, of course, play their part, and these can be supplemented and interpreted by all the suggestive symbolism of ritual and hymn, sacrament and sanctuary. But obviously the only complete expression of faith is in *personality*: the personalities of believers, individually or in fellowship. Nothing else can really "reveal" to us what faith is, and what the words of its doctrines mean. Nothing else could be a really adequate symbol. Nothing else could transmit the revelation. Geometry can be perfectly taught without any reference to the historical Euclid, to whom it owes so much. But it is quite different when you come to the higher and more intimate activities of the human spirit. Mere words are then inadequate. Professor Burnet begins his book on *Greek Philosophy* by reminding us of Plato's belief "that no philosophical truth could be communicated in writing at all; it was only by some sort of immediate contact that one soul could kindle the flame in another." And therefore, philosophies being thus "intensely personal things," he concludes that the indispensable task of the historian of philosophy is to "reproduce the Platonic contact of souls."[1] The same thing is much more manifestly true of religion. It is only through the revealing influence of believing men and women that we can be made to understand what faith means, and thus to see faith's Object. That is why a book like the Hebrew Psalter can do more for our religion than any mere system of doctrine. The Psalter not only transmits in words the truths which its writers discovered or believed: it brings us into contact with the very hearts of those believing men in ancient Israel—with the warm and beating heart of faith itself. It helps us to look through the eyes of their faith, and thus becomes to us a revelation of God, and, indeed, in its measure, the only conceivable kind of "objective" or historical revelation, being a living expression of the faith of those who have gone before us.

Now, if there should ever in the course of history arise

[1] John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, Part I., Thales to Plato, p. 1.

a Supreme Believer, he would, of course, at the same time be a supreme discoverer of divine reality, and his discovery would be to other men a supreme example of the " revelation " which, as we saw, they so much need. But obviously this revelation would be communicated to others not through his teaching alone, but through his whole personality and career, as expressed in his everyday words and actions in the various situations of life. And it could not be safely or worthily transmitted unless his personality could be made to live for the minds of future generations. This would be partly achieved by the living influence of his faithful followers in each age, but this could do no more than help feebly to interpret the story. *The story* of that historical figure, that Supreme Believer, would have a quite essential place in the religious life, because his actual *historical personality* would be the only adequate symbol of the faith which he represented, or the revelation which he mediated, for the calling forth of faith in other men. This fits in perfectly with our whole argument. And this is surely where we must begin in endeavouring to understand the place that Christian faith has given to the story of Jesus Christ.

It is not part of our task in this place to work out a Christology, or even to offer *prolegomena* to such a study, but merely to endeavour to see how faith in God, as we have described it, can be dependent upon an historical Incarnation. Christians have always believed that in Jesus Christ there was a supreme revelation of God, worthy to be called an Incarnation of the Divine. Now, what does it mean to say that the Divine Word was incarnate in a Man? How did this Incarnation show itself? One possible view, which has sometimes been influential, is that the Incarnation showed itself in a life whose psychical and moral conditions were utterly different from those of human life as we know it: that Jesus overcame evil by means of powers which, in the very nature of the case, are not at the disposal of other men; that His knowledge of divine truth and reality depended on the possession of mental faculties quite different from those which constitute human nature; and that He manifested His divinity by working signs and

wonders such as men could never conceivably emulate in any degree. But this view will hardly commend itself to anyone nowadays. It has become so clear that such a view is directly at variance with the teaching of Jesus Himself, and with the New Testament teaching about Him, and that to follow it out to its conclusions would be to fall into some of the worst errors which the Church, with much struggle, succeeded in avoiding in the ancient Christological controversies. Jesus did not overcome temptation by means of utterly different forces from those which other men around Him had at their disposal, if it is true that He was "in all things made like unto his brethren," and was "in all points tempted like as we are"—if, indeed, He really experienced temptation at all, which no one will wish to deny. He did not accomplish His "mighty works" by means of utterly unique powers which other men had no chance of possessing or using, but (according to His own explicit teaching) by a *faith in God* which others ought to possess and which would enable them also to work wonders. Thus we may say that it was by a supreme faith that our Lord lived His life and achieved His victory. Sometimes the word "faith" seems inadequate, for His knowledge of God was so direct, so intimate, so much a part of His very mind and nature, that we may well say that He *knew* the God in whom other men dimly and feebly believed. Yet it was not some utterly mysterious and esoteric knowledge of God, entirely different from what any other man could ever have. It was by real human faith, grown to its full stature, that Jesus knew God.[1] There is nothing higher for man upon earth. If we believe that our faith can ultimately, in some other realm of existence, pass into a fruition or vision of God, yet that is in its very meaning excluded from the conditions of human life upon earth. There is in these conditions, to which we must by all means believe that Jesus was subject, nothing conceivably higher than faith. So Jesus in His life on earth was "the pioneer

[1] Professor H. R. Mackintosh speaks of "the perfectly human character of our Lord's religious life." See pp. 383–403 of his *Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ.*

and perfection of faith." This faith, as we have seen, embraces all human values, and is the soul of them all, so that a supreme faith is at the same time a supreme love, and a supreme knowledge of God, a supreme victory over all the forces of evil, and a supreme realization of those values after which man has always been striving as the expressions and symbols of the life of God Himself. And it is because men found in Jesus a supreme realization of these values that they recognized in Him an Incarnation of the Divine. How else could such an Incarnation show itself? What other meaning could it conceivably have? What else could any one conceivably even look for in "the Word made flesh"?

To approach the matter in a slightly different way: Christians have always believed that *God supremely revealed Himself* in Jesus Christ. But this was not His only revelation. This was the crown of a long process. In all ages God had been revealing Himself to man, and most plainly and fully in that wonderful race which inhabited the highlands of Palestine, whose developing religious life is reflected in the Old Testament, and whose greatest Figure is Jesus Christ Himself. But the other side of this age-long and world-wide self-revelation of God is mankind's universal quest of the Divine. From the human side it can all be described as a pilgrimage of faith. God's quest of man was also man's quest of God. Every human apprehension of what is true and good, every straining of human faith to grasp the truth of the Divine—this was also God pressing into the consciousness of developing mankind with His revelation.

> "In beggar's part
> About your gates I shall not cease to plead—
> As man to speak with man—
> Till by such art
> I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan,
> Pass the low lintel of the human heart."

Now, what Christians believe is that both of these processes, God's quest of man and man's quest of God, reached their consummation in Jesus Christ. If Jesus was God's

supreme revelation, He was at the same time, and by the same token, and quite inseparably, mankind's Supreme Believer ;[1] for revelation is but the other side of faith, and it is only through the *faith* that we can see the *revelation*. So we see Jesus in the Gospels as one who supremely believed and trusted in God. In this He was, of course, dependent upon the long tradition of faith which went before Him, and He nourished His soul upon the expressions of it in the sacred writings of His race. But He went so far beyond it—so far beyond everything else, so far beyond the highest to which we can conceive our faith as attaining—that we almost hesitate to use in His case the same word "faith" which we use in describing the religion of other men. His consciousness of God was, as has been beautifully said, "the greatest spiritual fact that has ever emerged in the long story of the human race."[2] Yet it was a human faith, which sometimes had to work in the dark, as all faith must sometimes do, and which, as we can see in the story of the Passion, was subject to strain and was sometimes difficult, as all faith must sometimes be. It is so far beyond us that, in the interpretation of the inner life of Jesus in the Gospel story, we can only grope humbly and reverently for fragments of a reality which we can never fully understand ; yet, if it were not a human faith, open to such reverent interpretation, the Gospel story would be altogether meaningless to us, and could not help our faith. It is only a revelation that comes through faith that can, to us men, be revealing. But a life of perfect human faith, being indeed a perfect realization of divine values in human conditions, would be a perfect revelation of God to man. It would be a presentation to us of God as He really is, or at least as far as the human soul in this earthly life can ever know Him at all. It would take us to the point from which we could see faith's realities for ourselves, and thus it would

[1] Principal D. S. Cairns quotes from "one of the great Puritans" the beautiful saying: "Jesus was the greatest and best believer that ever lived" (*The Reasonableness of the Christian Faith*, p. 117).

[2] These are the opening words of Professor J. A. Robertson's *The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus*. But Professor Robertson does not consider "faith" a suitable word here.

" show us the Father." It would be not simply a perfect faith in God, for our imitation, but at the same time, and *ipso facto*, a perfect revelation of faith's Object—" God's Presence and His very Self, And Essence all divine." Yes, and not only should we, looking at such a faith, be able through its eyes to see something of its God : we should also become aware of God looking out through its eyes at us, coming into the very heart of our humanity to seek us out with His love. For the other side of man's quest of God is always God's quest of man. And both reach their consummation, Christians believe, in Jesus Christ.

But further : it follows from our whole argument that this revelation which came nineteen centuries ago through Jesus Christ can never be separated from Him. It can never be reduced to a system of religious truths which we can accept cut and dried, dropping the reference to His personality. That is (we have seen) just what you never can do with religious teaching. It is Jesus Christ Himself, His life, His ways, His outlook, His whole character and bearing, His essential career, His way of facing the Cross, that reveal to us what the realm of faith is really like, and therefore what God is like. In that sense *Christianity is Christ.* And it is a very deep and vital sense. For it means that it is not precisely any absolutely new doctrine that distinguishes Christianity, or, at least, not any doctrine that can be altogether expressed in words : *the* determinative fact is the fact that nineteen centuries ago there lived in Palestine a Person who marvellously believed in God, and thus was and is such a revelation of God as cannot be replaced by, or reduced to, any logical system of general religious truths. We shall not, indeed, agree with those who maintain that Jesus gave no quite new and original teaching about God or religion. It would be truer to say that His whole message was startlingly new, and it is the very essence of Christianity. But it is an essence which cannot, in all its truth and power, be successfully extracted and presented in isolation from the Personality which was its living embodiment. That Personality, that Life, is the revelation. That, after all, is the reason why we in

the western world and in the twentieth century still take an ancient oriental collection of writings as our Bible, and why we press it upon races of every tongue and colour over all the world. It is because that collection of writings is the historical setting of a Personality which emerged in ancient Palestine and which we profoundly believe can set before us, incomparably better than anything else in all history, what faith is, and therefore what God is. The Personality of Jesus gives us, we believe, a true and full and clear presentation of religious truth such as we could never conceivably have evolved for ourselves, and such as we cannot even retain and express for ourselves apart from the living image of His Personality.

And yet (in accordance with all our argument), when it is set before us by that Personality it requires no extrinsic proof. It comes to us with the compelling power of truth, drawing out from our hearts the faith which can recognize it as true. Through Jesus we see what faith really is in its perfection and power: how it faces life, how it thinks of God, how it prays to God, how it regards the various elements and problems of human existence. And thus through Him we see faith's Object, and are sure for ourselves: we believe and trust in God with Christian faith.

This shows us the sense in which Christian faith must be based on history, and the sense in which it must not. On the one hand, faith is not *proved* by certain historical events, as the older apologetic maintained. "The Jews require a sign," but in that sense Christian faith neither requires nor admits of proof. It has a direct inward assurance of its own, recognizing the truth when it beholds it. Yet, on the other hand, this does not mean any proud independence of history. Christian faith depends humbly for its knowledge of God on the revelation which is given through the supremely believing personality of our Lord. It continues always so to depend, and never outgrows that beginning, since it can never find any adequate expression or symbol for the things it believes except in the personality of Jesus. It is to this that we have continually to return. When faith

is dim amid the mysteries of life we come back to the Jesus of the Gospels ; and as we enter into His atmosphere, and look into the eyes of His love, and look through the eyes of His faith, we again see the truth revealed in all its perfection, and know that it is true ; we hear the voice of God with its self-authenticating notes. That is why, through all our Christian race, we have to keep " our eyes fixed upon Jesus as the pioneer and perfection of faith." [1] This is but the crown of our argument in the preceding chapters ; and, after all that we have said regarding the knowledge of God which comes to us through our absolute values, we can still remember our own utter dependence, amid the mysteries of religion, upon what is given to us, and can eagerly and gratefully join with the ancient disciple who wrote : " No one has ever seen God : the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." [2]

III

We have thus seen, at least in an elementary way, how Christian faith does require and rest upon a Person who can embody it and so call it forth in our hearts ; and that seems to meet one of our difficulties. But what, then, of the other difficulty ? How can faith *afford* to be dependent on anything which is at the mercy of historical criticism, as anything in ancient history must necessarily be ?

One old way out of this difficulty is to say that it is not the actual *historical* truth of the Gospel story that matters for faith, but its symbolical fitness and power. Indeed, this may seem to be the position to which in these last pages we have been unconsciously tending. For if the figure of Jesus is to be taken, not as a *proof* of the truths of faith, but rather as a supreme and indispensable expression of them, which can call forth faith in our hearts by setting these truths before us in a living symbol, might not this function be discharged by a purely ideal and legendary figure as well as by an actually historical one ? Does anything that we have said require the *historicity* of the

[1] Heb. 12^2 (Dr. Moffatt's translation). [2] John 1^{18}.

evangelic episode? We have the story and the picture of Christ, and no criticism can take them from us: and if they give us the symbol which we need, if they set before us what faith is and what God is, if they take us to the point of view from which we can see divine truth and be sure of it, does it matter whether the picture is an historical portrait or only the imaginative expression of a remarkable faith-movement which took place in the first century at the eastern end of the Mediterranean? Can we, then, save Christian faith from its embarrassment by historical criticism in this simple manner, by cutting the cable which connects it with actual historical fact, and being content with unhistorical symbol—with "truth embodied in a tale," not in a history? This old solution is the one which many would propose again to-day, as if it were new. "All the sweetness of religion," Mr. Bernard Shaw admits, "is conveyed to the world by the hands of story-tellers and image-makers": only, he would say, we must get rid of "the silly falsehood that the fictions are literal truths." "No student of science has yet been taught . . . that the law of inverse squares must be discarded if any one can prove that Newton was never in an orchard in his life." "In mathematics and physics the faith is still kept pure, and you may take the law and leave the legends without suspicion of heresy." And this, according to Mr. Shaw, is the lesson that the Churches ought to learn from Science.[1] What are we to say to it? "Is there," Mr. Collingwood asks, "anything we learn from the Christ-history that we could not equally learn from the Christ-myth?"[2]

The question may sound plausible, but when we turn our minds from generalities to the actual phenomenon of Christian faith, we cannot long parley with such a solution. Mr. Collingwood replies at once: "The simple religious mind would, I believe, emphatically reject such a suggestion. And this would be perfectly right." "The belief that Christ really lived, whether it is true or false, colours the whole consciousness of the believer." There can be

[1] See the Preface to *Back to Methuselah*, pp. lxxvii f.
[2] R. G. Collingwood, *Religion and Philosophy*, p. 53.

no doubt that this is the case. Whatever may be the rationale of it, there is here something without which Christian faith would be unrecognizable.

Moreover, whatever may be the embarrassments of such an historical connexion, it is surely vain to pretend that religion would be *better* without it. To dispense with actual history, to be content to turn the story into a parable, a symbolical myth, would be to reduce Christianity to the level of those lower religions which profess no essential connexion with a sacred history. Mr. Clement Webb has pointed out that "it is only certain religions, and those among the most highly developed, that contain an 'historical element' in this sense," and that "it is Christianity which has laid by far the greatest stress upon this element." As regards Greek religion, "so long as the ancient ceremonies were observed, so long as the cock was sacrificed to Æsculapius, it mattered but little whether one were orthodox with respect to the truth of the stories which were told respecting Æsculapius." But Christianity has never been content to treat its sacred narratives as mere appendages to ritual or "mere illustrative stories." It has insisted on their truth. And "it is a mark of higher development in a religion to emphasize this element." Moreover, since some have thought to make Christianity freer and more inward and personal by severing its connexion with history, it is interesting to find Mr. Webb pointing out more particularly that "this great emphasis on a sacred history is connected also with a greater *individualism* in religion," that "it implies a fuller recognition of the thoroughly concrete character of the religious experience, and a greater opportunity for individual appropriation of it."[1] Other writers emphasize the superiority of historical religion in other ways. Westcott said long ago that "a religion which is to move the world must be based on a history";[2] and Wundt, the psychologist, now tells us that "a world religion requires a personal founder," and that "the final and most important characteristic of world religion is the fact that it

[1] C. C. J. Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, pp. 23–32.
[2] B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, 5th ed., p. 8.

is pre-eminently an *historical* religion." [1] It is somewhat similarly, from the standpoint of social psychology, that Troeltsch (who devoted so much thought to this whole question of religion and history) perceived so clearly the impossibility of Christian faith living on without a firm historical basis. The person of Christ, he was sure, must remain at the centre of Christian fellowship and worship, if Christianity is to have any living future in the world. And not merely as a useful symbol, but as an historical fact. The people who imagine that for such a symbol the question of historical truth does not matter, are but playing with realities, vainly expecting the believer to satisfy his heart-hunger on a mere symbolic myth: such was Troeltsch's judgment. But curiously, while Mr. Webb emphasizes the individualizing effect which the historical element has upon religion, Troeltsch insisted upon the importance of this element for just the opposite reason—that without it religious fellowship and worship in a living communion would be impossible. According to Troeltsch, the elimination of the historical element results in a too individual type of religion, characterized by solitary devotion and somewhat unregulated enthusiasms, without any central point around which fellowship and cult may gather; and this tendency he considered to be one of the diseases of contemporary religion.[2] Doubtless these various reasons for emphasizing the historical element can be reconciled with each other.[3]

But if it is thus unthinkable that Christian faith should ever consent to let its sacred history be treated as symbolic legend, can we find any other way out of the old difficulty about leaving faith at the mercy of historical criticism? According to Troeltsch, indeed, there is no way out. The historical fact, which he regards as so essential, can never be established except by the methods of the historian. He could not agree with those who, like Herrmann, argued that

[1] W. Wundt, *Elements of Folk Psychology*, trans. Schaub, p. 509.

[2] Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu fur den Glauben*, pp. 23–31.

[3] According to Otto Kirn, the historical character of revelation has in modern thought been brought into very close connexion with the *practical* nature of religion, *op. cit.* p. 47.

faith itself has some independent means of winning assurance regarding the central fact of evangelic history. There is, to him, no escape from historical criticism. The battle must be fought, and if the result should be unfavourable to the historical fact of Jesus or to the possibility of our knowing Him, that would be the beginning of the end. Troeltsch himself was, of course, convinced that historical criticism does give us a solid kernel of positive truth about Jesus, which is sufficient for faith. But he did not shrink from saying that simple faith must be dependent in this matter on the findings of scholars—" or, better, on the general feeling of historical trustworthiness which results from the impression of scientific investigation." [1]

It may seem to many that this whole question, so much debated, is a somewhat unreal one. The lecture of Troeltsch's that we have been quoting was delivered just after the absurd controversy which raged in Germany in 1910 as to whether the figure of Jesus is historical at all. The negative view was such an isolated and negligible freak of scholarship that it does not raise any problem for Christian faith. And yet it does serve to reduce to a sharp issue this whole question of faith's relation to the uncertainties of history. The bare historicity of Jesus is not uncertain to any sane scholar. But, after all, Christian faith requires more than this bare minimum. It requires at least a portrait of His personality as expressed in His words and ways, His teaching and His career. It requires the assurance that we in the twentieth century can really know Jesus as He was. And can we be independent of the critical historian for this? And if not, might we not some day have to lament that they have taken away our Lord—leaving *something*, no doubt, some historical kernel, the mere name of one Jesus who lived in Galilee in the first century and was put to death in Jerusalem, but not the Jesus who can be the author and finisher of our faith? And what then?

We may reduce the question to the following acute form. If it should ever be proved by historical criticism that the

[1] E. Troeltsch, *op. cit.* pp. 33 ff.

Jesus of the Gospel story, in His essential character and career, never existed as an historical person at all, would it make any vital difference to Christian faith? We can hardly answer "No," for it would be an extraordinary admission that it does not matter to our Christian faith whether Jesus, as we know Him, ever lived or not. Thus we shall all be disposed to agree with Troeltsch, for one reason or another, that faith cannot afford to protect itself from historical criticism by giving up historical fact altogether and being content with symbol. But we can hardly answer "Yes" either. We can hardly be content to say that historical criticism *might* prove something that would be fatal to Christian faith, and thus accept the somewhat intimidating position in which Troeltsch settles. What other answer, then, can we give?

There is but one way left. Is it quite unreasonable to answer: Even our very faith can tell us that it *never will be proved* that the figure of Jesus is not historical? Is it really the case that the simple believer, when informed that there are scholars who deny the historicity of Jesus, can never be justified in replying that he knows by an inward witness of his own that Jesus really lived? Was the bishop to whom Bosanquet listened really guilty of a sheer confusion when he broke off his reasoned defence of the Gospel story with the impassioned protest that he *knew* these things were true? He may indeed (for Bosanquet does not tell us) have been dealing with details and particulars of the Gospel story. But if such a preacher were to confine himself to the general picture of Jesus, His personality as revealed in His words and His career, would he be guilty of an unreasonable dogmatism when he said that as a matter of inward religious conviction, quite apart from scientific investigation, he was sure of the historical reality of Jesus? Even Troeltsch seems to admit that this kind of thing may be admissible in individual cases of perplexity.[1] But can we not go further? Is it not perfectly sound as a general principle, and without any confusion or obscurantism?

[1] *Ibid.* p. 34.

We have been accustomed to the somewhat disturbing assurance that it is impossible to make the religious attitude to Jesus independent of the historical attitude to Him. But may it not be sounder to insist that it is impossible to make the historical attitude to Him independent of the religious? The same is true in all matters of religious history. There is a sense in which the religious man knows more about them than the "impartial" historian. Or rather, no man can be a worthy historian of intimately religious matters unless he is a religious man. There is nothing mysterious about this. One man may read the story of Jesus in the Gospels, and it makes no impression on him; and though he spends his life applying to the documents his methods of historical criticism, he never becomes sure of anything substantial as regards the historical Jesus. Another man, who is morally earnest and religiously eager, an honest doubter, and a humble seeker, reads the Gospel story and is gripped by it, sees through it the meaning and truth of religion as he never did before, finds in the personality and faith of Jesus a veritable revelation of God. To him the very suggestion that Jesus was not a real historical figure, or cannot be adequately known by us to-day, is absurd. He may be content to let many a detail be settled by the critics, but he is certain of the reality of Jesus as an historical Person, with a certainty from which he feels that no criticism could move him. He has a kind of insight that penetrates directly to that historical Figure, and makes him virtually independent of all historians as regards the central fact. It may be said, of course, that so far he *is* an historian, and that it is as an historian that he becomes sure of the historical fact. This may be perfectly true. But it does not mean that faith is dependent on historical criticism, but rather, perhaps, that in religious matters a true historical criticism is dependent on faith. The seeker who thus becomes sure of Jesus may have far less historical learning and critical acumen than the scholar who remains uncertain to the end; but the picture of Jesus "finds" him, leaps out in the most self-authenticating way to meet the uprisings of his faith and aspiration, reveals the

thoughts of his heart as nothing could do but the picture of a real human life lived in God. In this way he has attained to a wonderful understanding of the Gospel story, and in this matter is a better historian than the cool scholar. Even simple souls who have found God in Christ may find in their hearts this perfectly valid assurance that they know Him as a real Person, and thus are not at the mercy of the negative critic, since in this one point they may actually be better historians themselves. Such simple souls may be more dependent on the living testimony of the Church interpreting the Gospel story; but then this testimony of the Church to the historical reality of Jesus is also perfectly valid, for on this central matter, which is so near to her warm and beating heart, the Church may well claim to have a better understanding than the mere critic, and to be a better qualified historian.

It is not possible in this place to enter into the large questions, so much debated in our time, of the nature of historical knowledge, as to whether it can be distinguished from philosophy on the one hand, or from science on the other, though we should probably find ample support for the general position here adopted. But, lest we should seem to be resorting to mystification with a theological bias, we may think again of the very interesting passage by Professor Burnet to which we referred above. We have already insisted that there is nothing mysterious or unparalleled about the idea that faith itself has some direct means of assurance regarding the historic fact of Jesus, and that the work of the historian, in this particular matter, must depend upon that insight of faith. This is not unlike Professor Burnet's contention that even in philosophy the historian's work has no value except in so far as he can "reproduce the Platonic contact of souls" which brings us into touch with great personalities of the distant past. "In some measure," he goes on, "this is possible. Religious faith often seems able to break through the barriers of space and time, and so to apprehend its object directly; but such faith is something personal and incommunicable, and in the same way the historian's reconstruction of the

past is primarily valid for himself alone. It is not a thing he can hand over ready-made to others. There is nothing mysterious about this aspect either of religious faith or of philological interpretation. On the contrary, all knowledge has the same character. In the present case it only means that a man who tries to spend his life in sympathy with the ancient philosophers will sometimes find a direct conviction forcing itself upon him, the grounds of which can only be represented very imperfectly by a number of references in a footnote. . . . That is the sense in which philological inquiry, like every other inquiry, requires an act of faith." And then lower down, in description of his whole work, this sentence: "It is an attempt to lead the reader to the right point of view, from which he may then see for himself." [1] It is surely very significant to find the historian himself taking this ground, disclaiming the power to prove all his historical conclusions by a mere scientific array of evidence, and acknowledging his dependence upon a direct insight akin to faith, to which he can only help others to attain. *Mutatis mutandis*, this indicates very well the nature and limits of what historical criticism of the Gospel story can, on our view, do for Christian faith. It must, of course, reserve for itself the task of determining the details of the story; and it may, as is generally recognized, be of great service in helping the ordinary believer to see the facts vividly.[2] But on the central matter of the personality of Jesus, His historical reality, what He was like, what He meant, and what He taught, it can never present a cool and ready-made conclusion, positive or negative, proved by scientific evidence, for which faith would have to wait in trembling dependence. Such a science of historical criticism, in these intimately religious regions at least, is a pure chimera. It would be truer to say that the historian of these matters must *depend on faith*; or, rather, he cannot

[1] J. Burnet, *op. cit.* pp. 1, 2.

[2] We need only think of the large number of more or less popular books on the figure of Jesus in the light of modern research which have been published by scholars in recent years, and how much they have done for Christian faith in these times of perplexity.

be a good historian unless he has, in the depths of his seeking soul, that sympathy with his subject which can produce a " contact of souls " with the historical Jesus across the centuries. And since the Gospel story, enforced and interpreted by the living witness of the Church, is within reach of even simple believers, they can all be historians so far for themselves, with an assurance regarding Jesus which makes them relatively independent of what scholars may say ; an assurance based upon a deep spiritual understanding and " contact," without which even the scientific historian of this theme cannot do any useful work.[1] " This holds true," says Herrmann, " of every historical personality : the inner content of any such personality is laid open only to those who become personally alive to it, and feel themselves aroused by contact with it and see their horizon widened." " Only he who yearns after an honest fulness for his own inner life can perceive the strength and fulness of that soul of Jesus, and whenever we come to see the Person of Jesus, then, under the impress of that inner life that breaks through all the veils of the story, we ask no more questions as to the trustworthiness of the Evangelists. The question whether the portrait of Jesus belongs to history or to fiction is silenced in every one who learns to see it at all, for by its help he first learns to see what is the true reality of personal life." [2] It is this Ritschlian view

[1] After these words of my manuscript had been written, I came upon the following very interesting confirmation of their position by one who is himself a distinguished historical critic, Dr. Adolf Deissmann : " I believe that there is a way to press on to the full understanding of Jesus, but it is not a way made by historical science. The way of historical science is narrow. If one wants truly to grasp Jesus, one must make the way broader. It is the way which Paul called ' the more excellent way,' ' *Tantum Jesus cognoscitur, quantum diligitur* '—' Jesus is known as much as he is loved.' " Again : " Every historian who has more to do than merely investigate old texts, to solve chronological problems and make certain of outward facts, who has rather to deal with the soul of a great man, must in the end, if he wishes to gain an all-round picture, divine by means of intuition. This cannot happen without sympathetic, imaginative entry into the life, without *Agape* (love) " (*The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, pp. 20–3).

[2] W. Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, 3rd English ed., pp. 74 f,

of the problem that Troeltsch dismisses at first in his zeal for historical impartiality, to acknowledge later that it is not very different from his own conclusion. But it has not been part of our present purpose to expound these views fully or to mediate between them, but rather to endeavour with all possible help to solve the problem for ourselves.[1]

What, then, does our conclusion amount to? There are still some questions that might be asked of us, and to attempt to answer them may be the best way of making our position clear. *How much*, then, of the Gospel story can thus be certain to Christian faith, independently of historical investigation? Not, of course, merely the bare fact of the existence of one called Jesus; and again, not any collection of particular facts about His life; but something which is both more and less than this—His personality, His character, His outlook, His attitude to life and God and man, His "spiritual pilgrimage," His obedience unto death, His victory, or what Herrmann perhaps too boldly calls His "inner life." This is just the kind of "historical element" that we saw faith to be in need of: not primarily a series of events which would *prove* the truths of faith, but a Personality who could call forth faith in us. It is, indeed, impossible to draw a hard-and-fast line between this central, inward element in the Gospel story and the various details which only scholars can settle, just as it is impossible to draw a hard-and-fast line between the faith which is at the centre of religion and the theology which has to be worked out by specialists. And thus the free historical criticism of the Gospels must always be of deep interest to intelligent Christians, and not without effect upon their faith. But the more we move away from details to the general picture of the career and personality of Jesus, the more serenely certain do we become of the historical fact,

[1] The theological reader will see how greatly I am indebted to Herrmann in this discussion, but I am not sure whether the view adopted is precisely the same as his. And, indeed, throughout this book, while I have obviously learned a great deal from Herrmann and from the Ritschlian school in general, I have not made much use of the Ritschlian label, because I am not at all sure how far the positions adopted would be regarded as compatible with some of their typical, but very difficult, ideas.

and the more independent of the vicissitudes of historical criticism. This suggests, however, another question which may seem to take us back to where we started. Can we in this way become *absolutely certain* of the historical fact? The argument about knowing an historical personality by spiritual sympathy may be quite reasonable, but can we ever in this way attain to an historical certainty so absolute as to be a safe basis for our religious faith? Perhaps this whole question as to absolute certainty is a little abstract and unreal. But, in any case, it is surely clear by this time that we are not proposing to make the historical fact of Jesus the basis of faith in the sense of first establishing that fact beyond question *and then* deducing our faith in God from it. That would be the false kind of "proof" over again. We have rather shown the faith to be in a sense the basis of the historical judgment. Because a man finds God in Jesus, finds his faith kindled by the wonderful faith of Jesus, he is sure that this Jesus, whose personality has been so revealing, is a real historical figure. And this is so closely bound up with his faith (which is the deepest thing in his whole life) that he is as certain of it as he is of anything. Sometimes criticism may raise mists of doubt, but concerning the central fact of Jesus he has a deep certainty which remains untouched. Criticism might conceivably, for all that the ordinary man knows, reduce Alexander the Great to a myth, but it will never reduce Jesus. "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did," revealed to me all I ever yearned for, "all I could never be," all that my faith was straining after. Can I doubt the historical reality of that figure, that face?

> "That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows." [1]

To doubt it would indeed be to doubt one's very universe. To Christian faith it is as certain as anything can be—yet not as faith's premiss, but rather as faith's medium, and therefore eventually as part of faith's conclusion.

And now we can understand better than before the

[1] Robert Browning, Epilogue to *Dramatis Personæ*.

precise way in which this firm contact with a revealing fact of actual history is an irreplaceable part of Christian faith. It is in kindling our faith in God that the fact of Jesus becomes for us an indubitable historical reality. But the Christian faith thus at length kindled finds, after all its quest, not an elusive or absentee God whom it has at last overtaken unawares, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a God who, through all the ages of the past and in every event of history, has been seeking man with redeeming love. And so in the light of our faith the career of Jesus Christ, which is the chief episode in history, becomes *a marvellous thing which God did for mankind.* " It is all of God " ; and so it is a very central part of our Christian faith to believe that God our Heavenly Father, " of whom are all things, and we for him," did supremely manifest Himself, and does wonderfully seek us, in that historical Person through whom we come to know Him and put our trust in Him. And this " historical element " makes all the difference to Christian faith.

IV

This brings us to a further question which may have been troubling the reader. We have been speaking of Christian faith as faith in God through Jesus Christ. But how is this related to the *faith in Christ*, of which in all ages Christians have spoken ? To put the question in another way in which it is sometimes expressed : Is Christianity the Gospel *of* Jesus or the Gospel *about* Jesus ? Or again : Is Jesus the supremely believing *Subject*, the great Believer whose faith in God can help us to believe in God, or the supreme *Object* of faith for a Christian ? Does the " faith *in* Christ," of which we hear so much in Christian literature from the New Testament onwards, stand for something different from the " faith in God through Jesus Christ " which we have been describing ?

Surely not. Surely, at least, in the New Testament God is always the *ultimate* object of faith, and faith in Christ is not an *additional* requirement. To have faith

in Christ is nothing other than to have faith in God through Jesus, to have faith in the God who revealed Himself in Jesus, and thus to find God in Jesus.

As regards the teaching of Jesus Himself in this matter at the beginning of the whole movement, it seems clear, on the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels, that when our Lord kept urging men to have faith, He was speaking of *faith in God*. When He reproached people for being panicky in danger,[1] or for being unduly anxious in bad times ("O you people of little faith"),[2] when He spoke of the faith that could remove mountains,[3] or of the faith that could make prayer efficacious,[4] when He asked whether the Son of Man at His coming should find faith on the earth,[5] it was faith in the Heavenly Father that He spoke of. In the cases of healing, the faith He looked for in the patient may indeed seem to be faith in Himself and His power to heal. We find Him once asking: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"[6] And those simple, pathetic sufferers whose faith He sometimes accepted and commended—what did some of them know about faith in God? Well, they knew even less about faith in the Messiahship of Jesus. But they had at least a confiding belief in the power of Jesus, created by His own commanding personality. And yet even this was, Holtzmann says, "accepted and recognized by Jesus only as relating to the wonder-working power of God which manifested itself in works of healing."[7] "What He has in view," Professor Morgan tells us, "is not belief in His Messiahship or in any doctrine, but trust in the divine power that works through Him."[8] That comes out again and again in the most illuminating way. It was to His Heavenly Father that He looked up for aid in such cases,[9] and it was not to Himself but to God that He expected people to give the glory when they were cured.[10]

[1] Mark 4^{40} and parallels.
[2] Matt. 6^{30} and parallel.
[3] Mark $11^{22f.}$ and parallel.
[4] Mark 11^{24}.
[5] Luke 18^{8}.
[6] Matt. 9^{28}.
[7] H. J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der N.T. Theologie*, 2 Aufl., 1, 302.
[8] *E.R.E.*, v. 689.
[9] Mark 7^{34}, see Holtzmann, *op. cit.* p. 303.
[10] Mark 5^{19}, Luke 17^{18}.

Moreover, this faith in God was a thing that He expected people to possess, and to exercise, and to be able to work cures by, even in His absence; and once when they failed He said with disappointment: "O faithless generation!"[1] When the father of the epileptic boy said so pathetically: "If you can possibly do anything, have pity on us and help us," Jesus replied with a note of reproach, "If you can possibly! Everything is possible for a man who has faith."[2] This does not appear to mean faith in Jesus: it rather means that it was by faith in God that our Lord Himself was able to overcome disease, and that if other people had enough faith in God they could do it too. What Jesus was always looking for among men was faith in God. What He was always endeavouring to do was to make men believe in the infinite love and power of God. Of course, it was His own believing personality that inspired faith wherever He went. When He was there, people did manage to believe. Hopelessness and cowardice fled, God became real, the brave believing spirit arose in people's hearts amid their troubles, until Jesus was able to say to them: "Your faith has cured you."[3] It was confidence in Jesus, it was faith in Him; but Jesus welcomed it as the beginning of something more—that victorious attitude to life which He called trust in God. It was indeed faith in God through Jesus Christ.[4]

When we pass from the Synoptic Gospels and the life of Jesus to the rest of the New Testament, it becomes more difficult to describe what we find. We begin then to find a great deal about *faith in Christ*, and it might even seem as if this, rather than faith in God, were becoming the centre of Christianity. But let us look more closely.

When we read in our English New Testament about

[1] Mark 9^{19} and parallels.

[2] Mark 9^{23}, see R.V. See also Matt. 17^{20}. [3] Mark 5^{34}.

[4] There is only one place in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus ever speaks of people *believing in Him*, Matt. 18^{6}, and here the phrase is probably a later addition to the actual words of Jesus, since textual criticism removes εἰς ἐμέ from the Marcan parallel, and the whole phrase is absent from the Lucan parallel. See W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith*, p. 22.

"faith in Christ" or "believing in Christ," we naturally take this to indicate Christ as simply the object of faith, the one in whom Christians put their trust. But in many of the cases it is highly doubtful whether this conveys all that is intended. Behind the English rendering "faith in Christ" there lies a variety of Greek phrases (*πίστις Χριστοῦ, πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ, πίστις εἰς Χριστὸν*), and there has been considerable controversy among linguistic experts as to their meaning and their relation to each other. Not one of them is natural in classical Greek, nor is the usage of the verb "to believe" with a preposition governing a noun (*πιστεύειν εἰς* or *ἐπί*); and neither does the Septuagint explain them all.[1] A good deal of attention has naturally been bestowed upon the phrases since the papyrus-finds have shed so much light on the popular Greek of the Hellenistic age. But even in the days when scholars could only use their sense of classical Greek, it was sometimes felt that the phrases did not simply point to Christ as the *object* of faith. Schlatter considered that only with explanations and reservations should the Pauline *πίστις Χριστοῦ* be called an objective genitive, and that the preposition in the phrase *πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ* stood for something more than the object-relationship.[2] Deissmann, with a feeling for the popular Hellenistic Greek, on which he is one of the authorities, goes much further in the same direction. He has, of course, no sympathy with the superficial idea that the *πίστις Χριστοῦ* of Paul's writings (regarded as a case of the *subjective* genitive) is simply Christ's own faith, which we have to imitate; but he considers the *Χριστοῦ* to be so different from an ordinary objective genitive that it is necessary to invent a new term and call it a "mystical genitive"; and he holds that, *e.g.* in Rom. 3^{22}, the A.V. rendering "by faith of Jesus Christ" is better than the R.V. rendering "through faith in Jesus Christ." As regards the Pauline *πίστις ἐν Χριστῷ*, which can hardly be

[1] See Weinel, *Biblische Theologie des N.T.*, p. 259; Schlatter, *Der Glaube im N.T.*, 3rd ed., p. 588 ff.; J. H. Moulton, *A Grammar of N.T. Greek*, vol. i. pp. 67 f. *πιστεύειν ἐν Χριστῷ* is not found in the New Testament.

[2] A. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im N.T.*, 3rd ed., pp. 588, 592.

translated except as "faith in Christ," he holds that the true meaning is not that which is suggested by the natural English sense of that phrase (*i.e.* "believing on Christ"), but a more mystical meaning which can only be brought out by the stressing of the word "in," and which is closely connected with the whole Pauline conception of being "in Christ," about which so much has been written in recent years.[1] This would really make it a faith in God which is realized in union with Christ. It is difficult to see how this interpretation could be extended to the phrase πίστις (or πιστεύειν) εἰς Χριστὸν, which is used in various connexions both by Paul and by other New Testament writers, and which certainly seems to indicate Christ as the object of faith rather than its medium. Thus it cannot be said that linguistic studies have quite disposed of the question.[2] But we have seen enough to warn us against hastily assuming that the "faith in Christ" of our English Bibles, taken in its most obvious and idiomatic English sense, adequately represents what Paul meant to say about the relation of faith to Jesus. Paul's faith was faith in Christ, but, perhaps even better, faith in God through union with Christ.

Apart from discussion of the Greek phrases, however, it is deeply interesting to observe how, in one passage after another where the direct reference of faith seems to be to Christ, the ultimate reference to God shines through. It is, indeed, a remarkable thing how the New Testament, with all its exaltation of Jesus and its passionate devotion to Him, never even tends to allow this to eclipse its thought

[1] A. Deissmann, *The Religion of Jesus and the Faith of Paul*, pp. 203–6. In connexion with the use of the genitive after πίστις, it is important to recall the fact that it is this same construction which we find in Mark 11^{22}, where the meaning certainly is "Have faith in God." But as regards πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ in Mark 1^{15}, even Schlatter saw that this did not mean simply "believe in the Gospel," but rather something like what Deissmann later thought when (with the approval of Moulton) he translated it "believe in (the sphere of) the Gospel." See Schlatter, *op. cit.* p. 592; Moulton, *op. cit.* p. 67.

[2] Professor W. H. P. Hatch considers that all these Pauline phrases are "substantially identical in meaning," and he thinks that Χριστοῦ after πίστις is rightly explained as an objective genitive. But his general view of the Pauline idea of faith seems much the same as Deissmann's.

of God, and is never content until it has looked beyond and through Jesus to God Himself, with whom it all began and to whom it all leads in the end. When those early Christians spoke of the self-sacrificing love that led to the Cross, it was not only of the love of Jesus that they thought, and certainly not at all of the love of Jesus in contrast with the justice of God: they thought, above all, of the love of God Himself as the source of it all.[1] For these early Christians, faith often seems to mean belief in the resurrection of Jesus, or in the risen Christ, but here again it is very impressive to note how their thoughts kept rising up to God as the author of it, so that God the Father is the ultimate object of their faith. We find this repeatedly in Peter's speeches in the *Acts*. He speaks of "the Prince of life, whom *God raised* from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And by *faith in* (or *of*) *his name* hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, *the faith which is through him* hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."[2] It is curious to find "faith in his name" described in the next line as "the faith which is through him." An instructive parallel to all this is found in 1 Peter (whatever we may think of the authorship of that Epistle): "He was manifested at the end of the times for the sake of you *who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.*"[3] This is faith in God through Jesus Christ.

The Pauline evidence is equally instructive. After speaking of Abraham's persistent faith that God could quicken his aged body which was "as good as dead," and give him a son, Paul goes on: "It was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who *believe on him that raised* Jesus our Lord from the dead."[4] A precisely similar idea is found in another chapter: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy

[1] 2 Cor. $5^{18f.}$, Rom. 5^{6-8}, John 3^{16}, and many other passages.
[2] Acts $3^{15f.}$. [3] 1 Peter $1^{20f.}$. [4] Rom. $4^{22ff.}$.

heart *that God raised* him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." [1] And again, in another of his letters: "We also believe, and therefore also we speak; knowing that *he that raised up* the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus." [2] And in another: "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him *through faith in the working of God, who raised him* from the dead." [3] It is plain how *faith in God* is for Paul the vital matter, just as it was for his Master. Paul's faith is indeed faith "in Christ," but he cannot speak of it without letting us see that it is, more explicitly, faith in the God who "was in Christ," or faith in God through Christ. "To Paul, therefore," says Professor E. F. Scott, "as to the first disciples, the condition on which the new life is imparted is a simple religious one—trust in God, elicited by His revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ." [4] "With Paul, as with Jesus," Weinel tells us, "the really decisive thing is the faith in God." [5] "God, as possessing the power to awaken the dead," says Holtzmann, on the Abraham passages, "is the object of the Old Testament and the New Testament faith alike." [6] "Faith in the resurrection of Christ," says Johannes Weiss, "is fundamentally a trust in God, who has wrought this miracle, and to whom one can confidently commit oneself for everything else." [7] Deissmann thus sums up his discussion of "faith in Christ": "Paul's faith, therefore, is union with God, which is brought about in fellowship with Christ, and which is like that of Abraham, an unshakable confidence in the grace of God." [8] All this is abundantly plain. Dr. Alexander Whyte, of a very different school, was struck by it, and proclaimed it in preaching on Paul's words, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." [9] "In this text, as so often in other texts," said Dr. Whyte, "the Apostle carries up our

[1] Rom. 10^{9}. [2] 2 Cor. $4^{13f.}$ [3] Col. 2^{12}.
[4] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 267. [5] *Op. cit.* p. 249.
[6] H. J. Holtzmann, *op. cit.* ii. p. 133.
[7] *Das Urchristentum*, p. 324.
[8] Deissmann, *op. cit.* pp. 206 f. [9] Rom 4^{5}.

faith beyond even Christ, and beyond even His blood, and rests our faith ultimately and finally on God the Father." [1] This is faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Still more manifestly is this true of the faith which is so exalted by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a great book written expressly to vindicate the transcendent claims of Jesus in the face of unbelief and apostasy. He fills a long chapter with Old Testament examples of faith in God, but to him the supreme instance of faith in the whole history of the world is the faith with which our Lord faced the Cross; and in virtue of this, Jesus becomes "the pioneer and perfection of faith," to whom Christians must always keep looking, in order that their own faith in God may be maintained.[3] In his own fresh and human way this writer also exhibits Christian faith as faith in God through Jesus Christ.

In the Fourth Gospel, indeed, the emphasis seems to be placed upon "believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and probably the early Christians often spoke of "faith in Christ" simply in that sense. Nothing could be more natural, for this was, after all, the most obviously distinctive thing in their missionary preaching, in the interests of which all the New Testament documents were written. As regards the Fourth Gospel, Professor E. F. Scott tells us that "the 'believing' so constantly insisted on by John is something much narrower and poorer than the Pauline faith. . . . To 'believe' is to grant the hypothesis that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God." [4] And yet one of the striking things in the Fourth Gospel is how the Johannine Christ keeps pointing people beyond Himself to the Father from whom He came and on whom He depends, as the One whom His followers have to find in Him, and with whom they have ultimately to do. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." "In that

[1] In a sermon printed in his *Apostle Paul*, see p. 205.
[2] Heb. 3^{12} 6^{1} 7^{25}, ch. 11 *passim*. [3] Heb. 12^{2}.
[4] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 267.

day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father." And again, quite explicitly: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." [1] To believe in Christ, according to the Fourth Gospel also, is to find God revealed in Him. And not simply in the sense of accepting a dogma about Him; or, at least, the real acceptance of the dogma that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, can only be a result of the deep experience of finding the Father in Jesus. Professor Scott goes on to point out that, in the view of the Fourth Evangelist, "the act of belief, though placed apparently at the beginning, comes in reality at the end, of a religious experience." [2] His "belief in Christ" is the conviction which, as a result of his own experience, he keeps preaching to others throughout his Gospel, that Jesus is the One in whom men may find the Father revealed. Here, again, faith in Christ is not a rival to faith in God.

"Faith in Christ," says Principal Oman, "has frequently been so conceived as to be both a burdensome addition to faith in the living God and a misleading substitute for it." And a little later, these words, which are very suitable for us in this place: "We can now see why no Scripture writer ever dreamt that faith in Jesus could be a substitute for our faith in God, or a further burden upon it, or even any addition to it, or anything except the supreme succour of this faith, and why every word said about it thrills with strange, new, contagious joy in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." [3]

In our concluding chapter we shall have to ask some questions regarding the actual content and practical meaning of this glad faith in God to which Jesus leads us. In other words, what is the real "Gospel of Jesus," and how does it work out? But the present chapter has surely made it abundantly plain that Christianity does also offer a "Gospel about Jesus." It is only through Jesus Himself

[1] John 14^{10} $16^{26f.}$ 12^{44}. [2] *Op. cit.* p. 268.
[3] J. Oman, *Grace and Personality*, pp. 150, 155.

that we can ever believe His Gospel of the love of God, and so Christian faith in God is faith "in Christ." And this conviction that "in Christ" supremely we can find and maintain a victorious faith in God—what is this but (in its simplest and broadest terms) the "Gospel about Jesus," which, whether in the language of Paul or John or in more modern terms, the Church must always proclaim?

V

But finally: this Gospel about Jesus—is it about the historical Jesus who lived long ago in Palestine, or about the present and living Christ? We have been speaking of the Jesus whose presence and friendship helped the disciples to believe in God as they had never done before. But as we think of that unparalleled experience which was theirs, perhaps the wistful thought comes to us that there is a very great difference between knowing such a Person as the disciples knew Him, and reading about Him in a fragmentary record long afterwards. Well, was it not precisely to meet this kind of difficulty that some of the most wonderful words of the Fourth Gospel were written? To live alongside of Jesus in the flesh was one thing, but to have that episode as simply an historical memory after Jesus had departed was quite another—so the Christians of the second generation doubtless felt. "Nevertheless," says the Christ of the Fourth Gospel, "I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." [1] It was a very great thing for the disciples to have Jesus among them in the flesh; and yet that is not what Christian faith depends upon, and it must not be allowed to depend upon that. It must, indeed, always be dependent on the story of that wonderful life, but it has an inner witness and a living Presence, teaching it not to think regretfully of an acceptable year in the distant past.

And what is this living Presence which comes to us through the story of Jesus? Is it the Risen Living Christ?

[1] John 16[7].

Is it the Holy Spirit? Is it God Himself, our Heavenly Father? Sometimes the Fourth Gospel speaks of it in one way, sometimes in another. Sometimes in those marvellous passages it is Christ who is going to come and remain for ever with and in His people. Sometimes it is the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, who will do this, taking the place of the departed Jesus. Sometimes it is the Father Himself who remains for ever to be the God of those who have come to know Him through Jesus. And all these seem to be but different ways of expressing the great truth that, while we have to treasure the story of the historic Jesus who lived on earth in the past, we are not left desolate in a godless present; for through the story we are led to faith in the Living God, which is what ultimately matters. "These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. . . . If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I."[1] Jesus would no longer be with them, but, as a result of His having come and gone, the presence of God would be more real to them than ever before, they would have a new kind of experience of God, near and intimate, in their own hearts, teaching them new things for which even the words of Jesus Himself had not availed, as an eternal Spirit of Truth. And not only these disciples, who had known Jesus in the flesh for themselves, would have this experience. It would come also to others through the Gospel story, which the disciples must hand on, as only they could do, and which would meet in men's hearts with the eternal Spirit of Truth, and so kindle Christian faith. "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."[2] "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father,

[1] John $14^{25. 26. 28}$. [2] John $15^{26f.}$.

art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." [1] All this is an answer to the question how the Incarnation can help us now if it came to an end with the earthly life of Jesus. The answer may seem strangely to mingle the ideas of the Living Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Eternal Father. But, indeed, it can hardly be denied that in this great religious book (and perhaps in the rest of the New Testament too) these are but different ways of describing the same experience. They all stand for the vital truth that we have more than the story of the historical Jesus, we are united by faith to a Living Spirit who becomes supremely real to us through that story. If Christians speak of that Spirit as the Living Christ, they should be careful not to allow this to eclipse the idea of the Living God, or (worse still) to suggest that in the distant background there is a God who is less friendly and intimate than Christ, or (in another direction) to obscure the features of the historical Jesus and the importance of reading the old, old story of Him. The fact is that whenever people take those three ideas, so strangely mingled in the Fourth Gospel, and try to separate them into distinct experiences in their Christian lives, it is extraordinarily easy to distort the meaning of them all and make them all unreal. To speak as if Jesus were in any way identical with God the Father would be to fall into a grievous error which the Church through all its early controversies refused to tolerate. But to speak as if Jesus could ever occupy the central place in Christian faith *apart from* His revelation of the Father, or as if Christian faith could ever include a communion with Christ which was not at the same time a communion with the Father, would be to fall into another grievous error, equally alien to the Christian conception of God. It is not part of our task here to offer an interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, with all its obscurities, has enabled the Church to hold the balance between these two opposite false tendencies. But as regards our present subject of faith, the fundamental truth seems clear. The object of Christian

[1] John $17^{20f.}$.

faith is neither God apart from Christ, nor God *and* Christ, but God in Christ. Our Christian faith in God depends utterly on the story of Jesus ; and yet, not in any mechanical way which would leave us at a hopeless disadvantage as compared with the original disciples who were actual eye-witnesses ; for through that story the Living Divine Spirit who was manifested in Jesus can work in our own hearts and kindle our faith in Himself.

This is the position from which Christian faith can never really get away. Nineteen centuries ago in Palestine, One Jesus lived in the bosom of the Father, with perfect faith and love, and He is thus to our faith a supreme revelation ; yet not as *proving* anything, but as revealing something which our faith then leaps out to meet—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who seeks us out through His Son that we may know Him as our God and Father too. There have been many ways of describing this experience ; but the simplest and most universal for both the ancient and the modern world is to speak of faith in God through Jesus Christ His Son our Lord.

CHAPTER VIII

FAITH AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

SYNOPSIS

WHAT does faith really amount to—what does it really *say*—when taken at its best and highest (as we claim) in Christianity? What *is* Christian faith, as an attitude to life?

I. There is developing in the modern (especially Anglo-Saxon) world *a relatively new answer* to that question, and a discussion of this living contemporary issue will be a useful climax to our whole argument. In distinction from what we may call the *traditional* voice of Christian faith, the *newer* voice has a much less acquiescent and a much more importunate note, especially on the question of *suffering*, refusing to connect such evils with God's will, and rather conceiving of God as fighting with us against them. This may seem to be a relapse, under pressure of the problem of evil, to something much more modest than the traditional Christian optimism which believed in a God of infinite power, wisdom, and love. Yet the newer Gospel professes to be the older, and is usually animated by a genuine desire to get back to the simple Gospel of Jesus and to the indefatigable faith which He commended as a victorious force against disease and all human ills.

II. Various streams have gone to the making of this tendency, but its most typical expression is in the writings of the late Miss L. Dougall. Kindred tendencies, however, are to be found outside of Christian theological circles altogether, in the philosophy and religion of evolution, with its limited and struggling God (William James, Samuel Butler, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, S. Alexander, Lloyd Morgan, etc.).

III. This newer version of Christian faith has had *a really vivifying influence* on the religious thought of our time, and a genuinely Christian influence, bringing God near as a real Person upon whose help we can count without any unhealthy mystification. And yet it seems *in danger of giving up something* which faith cannot afford to give up.

IV. One indubitable fact is, that suffering nobly borne has a peculiarly refining influence on character. (This does not mean just *resignedly* borne.) Surely then it must, while recognized as an evil against which faith has to contend, and even when inflicted upon us by human wrongdoing around us, yet be (paradoxically) regarded as somehow having more than a negative relation to God's will. The mystery of suffering must be regarded as *having a place in God's* deepest and longest *Purpose* for us, and for each of us *individually*, if Christian faith is to be itself at all.

V. Apparently, when we try to reduce Christian faith to an extreme simplicity, so that there is no "mystery of suffering," but only a repudiation of it as an enemy of God and man, we are in danger of leaving out something vital to religion, and *reducing God to a great Comrade or Leader*; and the inadequacy of this becomes especially plain when we remember that Christian faith must deal not only with our pains and sorrows, but above all with our *sins*, to offer us forgiveness, which no mere Comrade-God can do.

VI. And as a matter of fact, this "newer" voice of Christian faith is *a much thinner voice than that of the original Gospel of Jesus*: the latter certainly had its element of *paradox*, most notably in our Lord's way of facing the Cross, which is thus the supreme symbol of the paradox of faith.

VII. The "newer" view has taught us highly salutary lessons, but we need also the lesson taught us by Baron von Hügel and Albert Schweitzer, that faith must refuse to sacrifice moral and religious depth and richness to logical simplicity. Conclusion.

CHAPTER VIII

Faith and the Gospel of Jesus

In this our concluding chapter we shall have to ask the question: What is it, fundamentally and essentially, that Christian faith has to say about the universe in which we live, or about the meaning of our life itself? What is the real conviction and attitude of Christian faith?

Here we may seem to be passing beyond the question of faith's nature and origin to the question of its content. But these two are (it must now be clear) quite inseparable; and if through the greater part of this study we pursued the general question, "What is faith?", we are now but asking what faith is and means when taken at its best and highest (as we claim) in Christianity. What is Christian faith? We came to see that all faith is essentially a conviction of good at the heart of the universe: a conviction that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill," or that the universe "means intensely and means good," that "perfection is eternal," or that love reigns supreme. These were some of the quite general descriptions with which we were obliged to be content. But now we shall have to ask: What does all that really mean, and what does it amount to, when taken in earnest and applied unfalteringly to the actual facts and problems of human life? What does faith, at its best and purest, really say? If (as we saw in our introductory chapter) Jesus called men to have absolute faith in God, and if in His Gospel we still find faith raised to its highest power, what *is* this Christian faith? If it is the very best and boldest, what does its optimism amount to? What is its attitude? What is its Gospel? What has it, essentially, to *say* to the great and burdensome questions of human life and divine over-

ruling ? Thus we are here asking not only what faith really says when raised to its highest power, but also whether this can be identified with the essential content of the Gospel of Jesus.

Now, it is plain that to answer these questions fully and in detail would involve a whole system of Christian theology, since the whole task of theology is to explicate what faith has to say. But within the much narrower limits of our present task it seems natural and useful to round off our discussion by attempting a sketchy answer to the question. For at the present time there seem to be two curiously divergent tendencies among Christian thinkers in this very matter ; two divergent views as to the kind of thing which faith really has to say. Here we seem to be at one of the growing-points of contemporary Christian thought, a point at which there is developing a difference of outlook, not on any mere questions of ecclesiastical dogma, but on the whole practical question of the Christian attitude to life, the Christian solution of the problem of evil, the Christian working-out of faith's conviction, and, indeed, the very meaning of the victory of faith. We must begin by endeavouring to set this very living issue in a clear light.

I

According to the one view, which we may call traditional, Christian faith assures us that everything that happens in the universe happens by the will of an infinitely wise and powerful and loving God. That is, indeed, on this view, the very essence of Christian faith : the assurance that everything is expressly ordered by our Heavenly Father for the good of His children, so that nothing can ever happen to them which is not appointed by His unfailing Providence. Of course, sin is contrary to His will : that is its very meaning. Yet, somehow, even the wrong acts of sinful men, with all their consequences, may be " permitted," if not " ordained," as part of God's perfect plan for the world—a purpose which cannot in any degree be thwarted or suffer or fail. When Julian of Norwich

wondered why the beginning of sin in the world had not, in the wisdom of God, been prevented altogether, this was the answer that reassured her: "It behoved that there should be sin; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."[1] As for suffering of every kind, when it comes it must be regarded as sent by God, to punish, to chastise, to correct, to sanctify His creatures, though sometimes for reasons that we cannot understand. Thus it is the highest attainment of faith for a man to accept the sufferings which he cannot escape as part of God's perfect and acceptable will for him. Accordingly, the true prayer of faith will always include the note of acquiescence and resignation; will, indeed, rest its main weight upon this truly religious reservation: "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." And underneath all our endeavours to make the world better and rid it of its evils there ought, on this view of Christian faith, to be a serene confidence that the triumph of good does not depend on our efforts at all, but is ordered and sure, and in a sense even eternally real, because God rules over all. All this is so familiar that at the present point we need not amplify it. And it is not any one school or tradition or age that has made Christian faith speak thus: it is familiar to anyone brought up in a Christian tradition at all, and could be illustrated from the literature of almost any period, and especially, perhaps, from the hymns that the Church is always singing. It may fairly be called the traditional view.

But in the modern world there has begun to spring up another view, or rather, perhaps, a new tendency, with many variations, but with an unmistakable unity of direction: a tendency to give Christian faith less of the quiescent note which comes of the conviction that somehow all is well, and to give it more of the challenging note, with the hope that all can be made well. Many Christians nowadays feel that the traditional voice of Christian faith speaks in a quite intolerable way of the evils of human life and their

[1] *Revelations of Divine Love*, recorded by Julian, Anchoress at Norwich; ed. by Grace Warrack, p. 56.

relation to the will of God. Is it not a sheer absurdity, and a morally paralysing absurdity, to say that all sinful acts are against God's will, and yet, somehow, everything happens according to God's will? And in any case, how could it ever be God's will that we should suffer the pains and disabilities of bodily disease, so manifestly contrary to the creative purpose which even the study of nature reveals to us? Even if these things may sometimes (and they certainly do not always, perhaps not usually) have a refining influence on character, we cannot imagine any good human father deliberately inflicting them upon his children. Moreover, such an idea must have an unwholesome influence not only upon our conception of God, but upon our whole practical attitude to the evils of life, making us, at best, vacillate between combating them and acquiescing in them. No, says the newer voice, these things are never in any sense in accordance with God's will, but are enemies of God and man, which ought not to be in God's universe at all, any more than the moral evil which we call sin; since God desires the welfare of our bodies as well as that of our souls. Thus the highest prayer is not the prayer of resignation, which accepts the evils, but the prayer of importunity which lays hold of God's power to banish them. According to this view, Christian faith does not acquiesce, but fights; it does not accept disease, sacrificing the body for the good of the soul, but rather *heals* disease; it does not make submission, but works miracles; it does not believe that everything on earth is according to God's will, but prays that God's will *may be* done on earth, and co-operates with God in working for a better future, in which none of the evils of the poor unfinished present will be found at all.

This newer voice of Christian faith is capable of making a very strong appeal in the present age, but in some respects it has a distinctly novel sound to anyone familiar with the traditional language of Christian piety. It is, perhaps, especially in the question of the Christian attitude to sickness, suffering, and (premature) death that the divergence becomes plain, and it will be worth while to quote some contrasting expressions of the old and of the new in this

connexion. A generation ago it would have seemed to most Christian people a fundamental truth that when these troubles came upon them it was God that had sent them, in His inscrutable wisdom. Max Müller, who sat very loose to mere traditional dogma, wrote thus of a sore bereavement: "There is the old riddle always before me, why was —— taken from me? Human understanding has no answer for it, and yet I feel as certain as I can feel of anything that as it is, it is good, it is best, better than anything I can wish for." And again: "There is but one help and comfort in these trials, that is, to know by whom they are sent. If one knows that nothing can happen to us without Him, one does not feel quite helpless, even under the greatest terrors of this life."[1] But to many Christian people to-day this would seem doubtful teaching, unworthy of Christianity. Here is a typical expression of the newer view, by a Christian writer who has been very influential: "We do not know enough about God's power to say dogmatically of any human experience that it is God's will. We cannot solve the problem of evil, but the worst possible solution of it that we can propose is the attribution of all our disasters and afflictions to God's providence."[2] In the latter part of the nineteenth century many religious writers were very earnestly grappling with the problem which was presented to Christian faith by the amount of suffering in the world, but they would hardly have dreamt of the attitude expressed in these words. When Illingworth wrote his fine essay in *Lux Mundi*, on "The Problem of Pain: its bearing on faith in God," he never hinted at such a way of apologetic; and he could say of pain (in its widest sense, as including delicate health, privation, bereavement): "So far from being our enemy, it is our safest ally in the battle of life."[3] When James Hinton wrote from the depths of his heart his beautiful book on *The Mystery of Pain*, he did not shrink from speaking of God as taking

[1] Max Müller, *Thoughts on Life and Religion*, pp. 200, 202.

[2] *The Christian Doctrine of Health*, by the author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* (Lily Dougall), p. 6.

[3] *Lux Mundi*, 12th ed., p. 90.

away our health and inflicting pains upon us; and his solution was not that faith can remove pain, but that "this faith has power to make pain good" by turning it into joy. "When we say pain is an evil, we can only rightly mean that *our feeling it to be pain* is an evil"; and the happiness for which God has intended us is not that from which pain is merely absent, but that in which pain is "swallowed up in love and turned to joy." "To wish the former were to choose the lesser good." [1] Even that veteran "Evolutionist Christian," Canon James M. Wilson, in a sermon (first preached nearly a generation ago) on "The Mystery of Pain," said: "I will welcome it as coming from God." "Perhaps Christ would say that the only way to tear away this earthly life out of our hearts is to send us pain and loss and suffering." [2] These men were all acutely conscious of the problem; and *that* was the kind of thing their faith had to say about it. But here is what the modern voice of Christian faith has to say: "We have seen that we cannot dogmatically assert of any given sickness that it is God's will; and that the strong presumption, that has become a conviction in many minds, is that sickness is never God's will, but is part of that evil from which His Holy Spirit is always striving to deliver us." [3] The same writer speaks of "the age-long superstition that disease of the body is good for the soul." [4] Another writer speaks of how "the Heavenly Father regards disease and pain and tragedy as hateful intruders into His world." [5] Another says, "It is almost, if not quite, impossible to look upon the loss or the disease which crushes or debilitates as a direct expression of the will of God and still whole-heartedly regard Him as our heavenly Father." [6] Illingworth took care to point out that it is not a Christian dogma that suffering was introduced into the world by sin; [7] but a modern

[1] James Hinton, *The Mystery of Pain*, especially chs. iv. and vii.

[2] James M. Wilson, *Truths New and Old*, pp. 293 f.

[3] *The Christian Doctrine of Health* (L. Dougall), p. 10. Cf. Percy Dearmer, *Body and Soul*, new ed., p. 333.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 191.

[5] Professor A. G. Hogg, *Redemption from this World*, p. 215.

[6] B. H. Streeter, *Reality*, p. 247.

[7] *Lux Mundi*, p. 85.

Christian writer says, "We can, without hesitation, affirm that all sickness is due to the existence and the potency of sin," [1] and this is somewhat characteristic of the tendency we are tracing. Hinton sought a solution of the mystery of pain by contending that it can be turned into joy when we regard it as playing a necessary part in "man's redemption." But the newer voice of Christian faith speaks of it rather as one of the things from which man has to be redeemed.[2] Thus, altogether, the newer voice speaks far less of the *mystery* or *problem* of pain, since it escapes the bitterness of regarding it as God's appointment by regarding it rather as His enemy from which He is ever seeking to save us, as we co-operate with Him. And this one matter of pain, sickness, tragedy, illustrates in a crucial way the whole of what we have called the newer conception of Christian faith.

Now, this may seem at first sight to be a hopeless relapse from the tremendous claims which Christian faith used to make. It may seem to be a retreat, under pressure of the problem of evil, to something much more modest than genuine Christian optimism—a belief (old enough, too) in a limited God whose will is confronted with an opposing kingdom of evil, which is responsible for all the ills of man's mortality, and against which He has to wage an uncertain warfare subject to frequent defeat. John Stuart Mill tells us that his father, revolting against the absurd contradictions and the immoral effects of believing a world so full of evil to be the work of an infinite God, used to wonder why no one in modern times revived the Manichæan type of theory—of a Good and an Evil Principle struggling against each other for the government of the universe.[3] If he had lived to-day he would have seen traces of such a revival on every hand, and it may well seem from the passages we have been quoting that these traces are to be found within the circle of Christianity as well as outside. We shall presently refer to the latter class. But, meanwhile, let us note that the tendency we have been de-

[1] J. Maillard, *The Sacrament of Healing*, pp. 37 f.
[2] A. G. Hogg, *op. cit. passim.*
[3] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, new ed., p. 23.

scribing, so far from being a revolt against, or a relapse from, the Christian standpoint, quite definitely professes to be a return to the simplicity and the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ Himself, with its real practical faith in the divine omnipotence. It is pointed out that when Jesus so urgently asked men to have faith, He did not mean resignation, but rather a force which could move mountains; that when He exalted prayer, He did not mean acquiescence but confident importunity; that He never, in all His extensive intercourse with sufferers, spoke of sickness and suffering as appointed by the will of God, or as a source of spiritual good, but rather as the work of Satan, whose kingdom He and His followers had to defeat by using God's power to heal disease. Here, it is said, we have the authentic voice of Christian faith, and it makes a far more splendid claim than the more quiescent view which afterwards became traditional in the Church; for it aims at using God's power to redeem the whole man, soul and body, and to rid this present world of all those evils to which a more narrowly "spiritual" Christianity has been too ready to grow resigned. Thus what we have called the newer view claims to be standing entirely in the line of that great tradition of faith which was begun by the ancient Hebrews in distinction from the rest of the world, and which Jesus Christ inherited and developed—"the splendid enterprise of faith with which the Hebrews asserted that God would make good this faulty world, that God, just because He is God, must have created all things good and must cancel the world's sin and suffering and fulfil His original purpose." "Other nations came more easily by the hope of an immortal life for noble souls, leaving the wicked world to swing on its blank and permanent way to destruction." But the Hebrews could not be content with such a dualistic outlook, or with conceiving religion as merely "spiritual." To them "God could not be God without planning and bringing to pass by His own power a perfect salvation for body and soul in which all nations should rejoice." And it was this faith that Jesus took and developed to full flower; while it was the later Church that

was led astray by alien influences, such as contempt for the body, and so " came to make her venture of faith only for 'spiritual good.' "[1] Thus it is not what we call the " newer " view, but rather the traditional view, that now appears to be a kind of Manichæan lapse from full Christian faith, a sub-Christian resignation to the physical evils of our lot, as if only the soul mattered ; while the " newer " outlook claims to be the original Christian faith which Jesus commended to the people of Galilee as a force which could use God's power to banish all evils. On this view God's sovereignty may, indeed, seem to be limited by the refusal to ascribe all the vicissitudes of our lot to the appointment of His will ; but the reply would be that this is only to exchange a semi-pagan conception of divine sovereignty for a more truly Christian conception. When James Hinton was endeavouring to explain and illustrate his gospel of the mystery of pain, he very effectively quoted a long and beautiful passage from Marcus Aurelius, about " accepting everything that happens, even if it seems disagreeable," because it is part of the appointed plan for universal good.[2] But, after all, the religion of Marcus Aurelius was Stoicism, not Christianity ; and the newer voice to which we have been listening is found rather quoting Jesus Christ. It is a peculiarly modern voice, betraying many modern influences, and yet it finds itself surprisingly at home with the Gospel of Jesus ; so that the first and the twentieth centuries are made strangely to meet in a version of Christian faith somewhat different from that which became traditional in the Church during the long interval. That is how many thoughtful Christians of to-day would judge the matter, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world.

II

Before we go on to examine the capacities of this newer view of Christian faith (which yet claims to be the older),

[1] *The Christian Doctrine of Health*, pp. 193 ff. Cf. the argument of Professor Hogg's *Redemption from this World*.

[2] James Hinton, *op. cit.* ch. vii.

we may pause to ask whether any account can be given of the influences and the process by which it made its way into the modern world. It has been said that one of the differences between the medieval and the modern spirit is that nowadays people think more about pain than about sin ; [1] and this seems relevant to our question. In the Middle Ages Christians were intensely conscious of the war against sin, even against the body ; while suffering was accepted as part of the order of things, or even as a thing to be inflicted upon oneself for the soul's good. Perhaps the exclusive preoccupation with sin, as the thing from which we have to be redeemed, is really more characteristic of the Reformers than of the medieval Christians.[2] But, in any case, there does seem to have developed in the modern world a new sensitiveness to " the mystery of pain," about which so many Christian thinkers in the latter part of the nineteenth century felt constrained to write. Moreover, in that period the growing sense of social responsibility was tending to make men dissatisfied with a Christianity which acquiesced in the evils of the existing social order, while aiming only at saving men's souls for another world. It is well known that it was this kind of reason that made the socialistic movement in certain quarters from the first so critical of religion. According to Karl Marx, Christianity, with its talk of another world, was simply an opiate, making people insensible to the evils of the present world, and therefore content to leave it as it is. But something of the same feeling worked also among the English " Christian Socialists," leading to a new conception of Christianity in relation to life's evils. The Christianity of Charles Kingsley was in some ways a remarkable anticipation of the newer view that we have been describing. In his case we can see the beginning of that new delight in the

[1] R. H. Thouless, *The Lady Julian*, p. 66.

[2] Baron von Hügel points out that in the Middle Ages the widest contrast is " not Sin and Redemption (though these, of course, remain), but Nature (however good in its kind) and Supernature " ; while " the Protestant Reformers, as a whole, went even beyond Saints Paul and Augustine in exclusive preoccupation with Sin and Redemption " (*Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion*, 1st series, p. 88).

body, that disposition to find God's purpose revealed in healthy natural processes and to claim nature as God's, which has since been so influential. It was he who taught us to pray in those words which we have so long been singing without realizing their significance :

> " Hasten, Lord, that perfect day,
> When pain and death shall cease,
> And Thy just rule shall fill the earth
> With health and light and peace."

Moreover, Kingsley even noticed and pointed out that " the Gospels never speak of disease or death as necessities ; never as the will of God. It is Satan, not God, who binds the woman with a spirit of infirmity." He pointed out that the Gospels, which speak of disease more than any other part of Scripture, omit almost entirely the comforting view of it as a means of moral and spiritual good. " And why ? Only to force upon our attention, I believe, a view even more cheering and comforting : a view deeper and wider . . . that God does not only bring spiritual good out of physical evil, but that He hates physical evil itself ; that He desires not only the salvation of our souls, but the health of our bodies." Again, speaking of the tragedies of premature death and bereavement, he said : " What arguments will make us believe that that ought to be ? That that is God's will ? That that is anything but an evil, an anomaly, a disease ? Not the Bible certainly. The Bible never tells us that such tragedies as are too often seen are the will of God." [1]

Much of this must have sounded novel to the people to whom Kingsley preached it, since it seemed to limit the sway of God's will. But the tendency apparent in it has developed enormously since the twentieth century came in, resulting, as we have seen, in a quite distinctly new view of what Christian faith has to say. There are traces of it on every hand in the theological writing of our time. Many names might be mentioned. Perhaps the most significant influence of all was in the work of that highly

[1] Charles Kingsley, *The Water of Life*, Sermons ii. and iii.

independent and original writer, Miss Lily Dougall, who was so long anonymous as the author of *Pro Christo et Ecclesia* and the remarkable series of books which followed it, and who was the leading spirit of the " Cumnor Group " of theologians.[1] It might be said that her theological life-work was to elaborate a new conception of the attitude of Christian faith ; to question whether the traditional Christian attitude to the evils and problems of life is a really healthy attitude ; and to suggest the elements of a new view of suffering and providence and the will of God and the victory of faith, which would be more in accordance both with the purpose discernible in evolving nature[2] and with the actual gospel of Jesus. The influence of this lay-theologian has been great. But the general tendency she represented has become powerful in the minds of countless Christian people who never read her books. It is especially pervasive (the present writer would judge, from a short visit) in the religious mind of America. It is connected with most of the faith-healing movements which are so characteristic of the religion of our time. It is, indeed, constantly appearing in one form or another in most of the live theological thinking of the twentieth century, at least in the Anglo-Saxon world.

But it is also instructive to note that outside the realm of theological thinking, and, indeed, outside the pale of professed Christianity altogether, there are very broad and unmistakable traces of the same general tendency. The philosophy of William James was largely a revolt against what he called " the airy and shallow optimism of current religious philosophy," [3] a revolt against the more absolutist kind of faith which made all the evils of life to be but necessary elements in a universal and perfect good whose victory is sure and even eternally real. In revolt from this absolute optimism, James stood for what he called " meliorism " : a faith which regards the evils of life as

[1] See our quotations above.

[2] For this point, see especially her *Voluntas Dei*, ch. iii., and *The Christian Doctrine of Health*, ch. vii.

[3] W. James, *Pragmatism*, p. 28.

real evils and the fight against them as a real fight whose issue is not foreclosed, but which has good hope of making the world gradually a better place. Thus, if James was a theist, his was "the melioristic type of theism," and his God was not an "Absolute." Since he began to write, there has been a very widespread development of the idea of a limited or finite God, whose will is not the cause of all that happens, but is rather a struggling will alongside of ours in the battle against every kind of evil. The doctrine of evolution has contributed towards the formation of this idea (just as it influenced Miss Dougall's theology), and in many different quarters to-day we can find the conviction that the true faith is faith in evolution, and the real God is the God who works in the process of evolution, towards a more perfect existence. Everybody will think of Mr. H. G. Wells, and his conception of "God the Invisible King"—a personal God of limited power but boundless love, who came into being in the course of evolution and now works through men for the making of a better world. Still more definitely does Mr. Bernard Shaw find in the religion of evolution the solution of the old mystery of pain and evil. "The problem of evil," he says, "yields very easily to Creative Evolution. If the driving power behind Evolution is omnipotent only in the sense that there seems no limit to its final achievement; and if it must meanwhile struggle with matter and circumstance by the method of trial and error, then the world must be full of its unsuccessful experiments. . . . The theology of the women who told us that they became atheists when they sat by the cradles of their children and saw them strangled by the hand of God is succeeded by the theology of Blanco Posnet, with his 'It was early days when He made the croup, I guess. It was the best He could think of then; but when it turned out wrong on His hands He made you and me to fight the croup for Him.'"[1] This is, of course, but a crude expression of Mr. Shaw's own view, but his religion of creative evolution does believe in a Power working through all the ages, with a not wholly tractable material, to produce

[1] See the Preface to *Back to Methuselah*, pp. lv f.

a better world, in which disease and even death will be left behind. A forerunner of Mr. Shaw's theology of evolution is, of course, to be found in Samuel Butler's extraordinary little book, *God the Known and God the Unknown*. It is a very remarkable thing to find so many brilliant writers coming by their own paths to the conclusion that, while there is no trace in the world of the infinite God of traditional theology, we can find clear trace of a finite God working through the evolutionary process. Within the realms of more technical philosophy, too, we cannot but think of Professor Alexander, with his conception of a universe evolving towards deity, and Professor Lloyd Morgan, with his theory of emergent evolution directed by a divine purpose, concerning both of whom the present author is too ignorant to write. Throughout all this new religion of evolution there runs the idea that the universe is not yet finished, that its defects are real defects and its progress real progress. Its God is not the Absolute. These theories may all seem, indeed, to be far enough away from every kind of Christian faith. But Professor Matthews remarks that at least in making time and progress real, " they are more in harmony with the Christian view of the world than many systems of Absolute Idealism which seems to reduce all that happens to an illusory dance of shadows." [1] And it is not difficult to see a certain affinity between these contemporary tendencies and the " newer " view of Christian faith, which revolts from conceiving the divine omnipotence " as controlling all the events of history, public and private, as we control the movements of pawns on the chessboard," and finds God's power in the world better symbolized by " the power of life which can take inanimate matter and turn it by orderly processes into what is beautiful and glorious in tree and flower, into the beauty and motion and intelligence and affection of birds and beasts, and even into the efficiency of the human brain." " The more we contemplate this power of life," Miss Dougall goes on, " the more we shall realize that it is very closely

[1] W. R. Matthews, *God and Evolution*, p. 35. I have been much indebted to this excellent little book in writing these pages.

akin to all that is taught us in inspired writings concerning the power of God." [1]

III

It is this whole issue between the "newer" and the "traditional" version of Christian faith that we must now briefly consider.[2] Which of these two things is it that faith, at its best and highest, really has to say? Which does true faith mean, when it says, "I believe in God"? This is not merely a difference between two *theories* of faith, but a genuine practical difference between two attitudes to life. Which, then, is the truer faith? Or, at least—if the issue cannot be as clear-cut as that—has the newer tendency, that we have been tracing, anything valuable to contribute to our understanding of Christian faith?

To the latter question the answer must surely be in the affirmative. This tendency is undoubtedly one of the vivifying movements in the theology of our time. For one thing, it does endeavour to take the gospel of Jesus in earnest. We saw at an early point of our study that faith was for Jesus the very nerve of religion, the one thing needful. But it is almost disconcerting to any one with the traditional Christian outlook to make the further discovery that when Jesus spoke of faith it was usually in connexion with the power to work what we call miracles. The faithless people were often the people who did not believe that they could have their diseases healed by divine power. To have faith meant, not to believe that somehow all is well, but to believe that God both could and would *do* things for His people. Historical criticism may leave us in some doubt as to the nature and extent of the wonders actually wrought by faith in the time of Jesus. But, at least, we cannot be content with the complacent view that these things were restricted to the "age of miracles," and that faith must

[1] *The Christian Doctrine of Health*, pp. 4 f.

[2] If the discussion that follows appears in some respects to be ill-proportioned, let it be remembered that I am not attempting to give a systematic exposition of the convictions of Christian faith, but to deal with one living issue, which has its own chosen battle-ground.

mean something different to us; that in Jesus' time faith conducted a victorious campaign against disease, but must in our time rather accept it as God's will. Such a view is contrary both to the spirit and to the letter of the New Testament, and we cannot but be grateful to those who have sought to rescue us from its unreality, and to give us a more vital and Christian conception of what faith is called to be and to do. This is a truly Christian movement, actuated by a genuinely Christian impulse: a Christian attitude to suffering, a Christian claim to believe the very best about God, and to make Him real and bring Him near.

In one of Mr. Galsworthy's tales, a tender-hearted old man, thinking sadly of the death of a little girl of seven with whom he had been friendly, was heard whispering to himself: "God cannot be like us." That is a good illustration of the unconscious judgment of much traditional Christian faith. It is God that wills and causes such a death. And yet, how could He? And why should He so prematurely destroy what He has made? What good human father would will or do such a thing? Of course God is good, but it must be in some inscrutable way—He cannot be like us. So God becomes somewhat distant and unreal: not a very present help in trouble, but a very abstract kind of consolation. In fact, it may seem that traditional Christian thought, refusing to limit God's goodness, wisdom, or power in any way, even in face of the terrible evils of life, and taking refuge in the idea of an inscrutable mystery, has reduced God to a dreary abstraction, which can *do* nothing for us at all. Thus one writer tells us with some justice that "it is the abstract theologians who limit God." [1] That is a real danger, and it is a good thing to be brought back from abstractions, which leave one bewildered and impotent in face of life's evils, to the simple spirit of Jesus, who (as even Harnack pointed out) "never says that sickness is salutary and that evil is a blessing," but "calls sickness sickness and health health," [2] and urges men to overcome sickness and achieve health by

[1] Bishop McConnell, *Is God Limited?* p. 52.
[2] Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 39.

faith in the power of God. It is good to be brought back to faith in a God who, when His children ask for bread, will give them bread and not a useless stone or a poisonous serpent or scorpion. And the newer view which we have been describing is largely an attempt to take all that in earnest, and to bring us back to God as a real Person, upon whose beneficent ways we may always count without any unhealthy mystification. It has sometimes been too easy for traditional Christianity to satisfy itself with an aimless and unexpectant kind of acquiescence, which but covered up the lack of genuine Christian faith; and we ought to be grateful to a movement which calls us to take faith in earnest.

Yet one cannot but feel this movement to be in danger of giving up something vital in its desire for Christian simplicity. The difficulty has always been to believe both in God's infinite power and in His infinite love, in face of all the evil and suffering in the world. Christianity has always professed to believe in both equally. But in the past the danger has usually been that of emphasizing (in the face of heresy) His infinite power, ascribing all events to His sovereignty, until His infinite love became somewhat obscured in the clouds of the mystery of evil. That was indeed a fatal tendency. And the present tendency is to the other extreme. There is such a determination to hold firmly to the infinite love of God, as revealed in the utter simplicity of the Christian Gospel of "Our Father in Heaven," and in the light of this to reinterpret the idea of God's power, that something seems to be lost of the divine sovereignty on which Christian faith has always rested. A recent writer has suggested that instead of putting all God's attributes on the same level of importance—"all in one line"—we ought to put His fatherly love, as it were, at the centre of the circle, and His wisdom, power, and justice on the circumference or radiating towards it.[1] It is indeed vital for religion to keep hold, at all costs, of the infinite love of God. But surely the danger of the newer view is that, with the best will in the world, we shall give up something

[1] J. M. Shaw, *The Christian Gospel of the Fatherhood of God*, p. 11.

vital as regards the divine sovereignty. That may be a bad phrase, and we must in this matter beware of clinging to mere words. We must sympathize with the protest that is often made to-day against the futile endeavour to take one's stand blindly on the word "omnipotence," or on the formal abstract notion of a Being who can do absolutely anything, and whose will can never conceivably in any sense be thwarted. It is doubtless quite true to say, as is often said in the modern world, that such a doctrine of divine omnipotence may safely be given up, since religion has no interest in it. But surely it is not only this formal, abstract conception of omnipotence that we are now sometimes asked to give up: we are in danger of losing the very practical religious comfort and strength which, in the face of disaster, can come to us from the conviction that the whole course of our lives is in the hands of God. Therefore, let us see whether we cannot learn from the newer view, without giving up all that, in its desire for simplification, it seems to give up, and so impoverishing our faith.

IV

What is it, then, that faith really has to say, in face of the ills of life?

1. We may begin with one incontestable fact, which cannot by any argument be emptied of significance, and which surely must have a place in any teleology which exists in this universe: the fact that suffering, nobly borne, has a peculiarly refining influence upon character. There is, indeed, produced in this way something spiritually finer than could possibly—so far as we can imagine—be produced in a universe where there was no suffering at all.

It is important to separate this truth from its obvious perversions. We must whole-heartedly repudiate the morbid glorification of suffering in itself, and the harmful fiction that delicate health has any necessary connexion with saintliness, and the irreligious habit of attributing our sickness to God's will more than our health. Baron von Hügel does, indeed, make it historically certain that religion

can sometimes, by its very intensity of spiritual experience, impair the bodily health ; and he asks whether the price is not worth paying, since " physical health is not the true end of human life, but only one of its most important means and conditions." [1] But it need not be questioned that spiritual soundness, the spirit of faith and love, makes *on the whole* for bodily soundness too, and it appears probable that, on the whole, the great saints, far from being physically fragile, were persons of extraordinary robustness and vitality.[2] Disease is one of the enemies against which faith has to fight, as it did so successfully in the time of our Lord, and no limits can be set to what it can achieve in this or any other matter. And yet that is not all that has to be said. For suffering does become the occasion of great spiritual gain when faced in a Christian way.

2. But what, then, *is* this right and Christian way of facing it ? Certainly not anything like a valetudinarian acceptance of disease. Such a morbid disposition on the part of an invalid tends neither to bodily recovery nor to the spiritual enrichment which can come through suffering. The paradox of suffering is that, just because it is in itself an evil, and only so long as it is felt to be in itself an evil, it can be turned to greater spiritual good. It can never be right to love ill-health, or to be without the desire for health and the eager endeavour to regain it. Is this, then, the Christian attitude : simply a will-to-health, a determination to get better ? Surely that is not enough. Psychology itself in these days teaches us that it is not the Will that can give us the victory over ill-health, but the Imagination —an activity of the imagination which has something to do with *faith*. And certainly the Christian way of facing life and its sufferings is a way of *faith in God*. But what does faith mean in such a situation ? Does it mean the conviction that everything in our lives must be passively and resignedly accepted as a direct expression of God's

[1] *The Mystical Element of Religion*, new ed., ii. 57. Cf. what Dr. Percy Dearmer says about St. Paul's malady being the result of his spiritual experiences (*Body and Soul*, new ed., pp. 216 f.).

[2] See L. Dougall, *Christian Doctrine of Health*, p. 37.

will? That would be more like Stoicism or Islam than like Christian faith. Does the Christian faith of an invalid, then, mean the sure conviction that God will restore him to health? Such a conviction is impossible for many a sufferer. Or does Christianity teach us that every sufferer could count upon recovery if only he had enough faith? Surely Christianity does not give sufferers such a heartless message. What is it, then, that the sufferer is to be encouraged to believe? That God is with him in constant sympathy and helpfulness? Yes, but *what* God? Is it a limited God, whose purposes are absolutely at the mercy of alien or hostile forces which He cannot control? Certainly it is not a God whose purposes are equally manifest in all that happens, but it must somehow be a God upon whose unfailing Providence faith can rest. There must be more than a divine sympathy and help, as of a great Friend in the midst of the struggle. There must be an unfailing divine Purpose, to which faith can cling when the struggle seems hopeless and suffering refuses to depart: a Purpose which embraces far larger and higher aims than bodily health, and which embraces every means that contributes, in however circuitous a way, to the fuller realization of those supreme ends.

3. But, now, let us remember the fact with which we started: that *suffering* is one of those means, and can play a uniquely important part in our moral and spiritual development, which is the highest end of which we have any conception. Surely, then, surely, if there is any divine Purpose at all, this must have a place in it. If it is really true that something morally and spiritually finer can be produced in the conflict with suffering than could possibly be produced in a universe where suffering was unknown, then, surely, the presence of suffering in the universe must have more than a negative or antagonistic relation to the Will and Purpose of God.

It seems unnecessary to spend much time upon the question whether there would have been any suffering in the world if there had been no sin. It is sometimes dogmatically claimed that wrong-doing in some form or other,

the breach of the laws of right and healthy living, through ignorance or wilfully, is the ultimate cause of all the suffering of mankind. It is difficult to see how this could be true of the suffering caused by natural catastrophes,—tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, and the like,—though it cannot be absolutely ruled out as logically inconceivable that even this is due to wrong choices by free-willed creatures in some region of the universe. But such speculations are utterly unprofitable. Part of the suffering of mankind is, of course, due to the neglect of certain hygienic laws, and we all believe it to be God's will that we should learn these laws and put their lessons into practice, and so banish the evils. Yet mankind *could* not have done that from the beginning : it was a case of inevitable ignorance. So that, if there is any divine Purpose at all, it must embrace this discipline, in which man is driven by suffering to find out its cause and work for its removal, in an agelong gradual progress. Even if it be true that all suffering is ultimately due to the existence of sin, *this connexion* also must be of God. Of course, no one has ever contended that God wills suffering for His people as an end in itself. Christianity has always taught that the ultimate goal must be a state from which both sin and suffering will be absent. But if the order of things which makes sin lead to suffering in the universe is in some sense of God's appointing (and what else can it be, if God is to be God at all ?), then, surely, it is part of the divine Purpose that the discipline of suffering should have its place in the moral struggle of an imperfect world. Thus, whether or not we connect all suffering causally with sin, we cannot but believe that the Purpose of God for mankind includes that secret, that mystery, that method, which can produce something nobler than could be produced in any other way—the discipline of sorrow and pain. It is not enough to believe that God can help us to win good out of the evil, turning the enemy's flank and forcing his troops into our service. For if all this was really an indispensable condition of our own highest good, then the enemy was not purely and sheerly an enemy, forcing a campaign on us to our hurt against God's will : rather must this whole

order, with its element of suffering as part of the very material of the moral and spiritual life, belong somehow to the Will and Purpose of God.

4. But we cannot go so far without going further, and thinking of God's purposes for the *individual* in the daily circumstances of his life. For if it is impossible to think of the general order of things as a fixed order which God has to accept, it is equally impossible to think of it as a general arrangement of laws ordained by God, limiting His action in the lives of individuals, so that the actual results of their working have no relation to His Will. "God can never be content to adopt the clumsy finite device of submitting to the guidance of rules—of mere generalizations like those, the sum-total of which we regard as the order of nature; each new event He must decree on the individual merits of the situation out of which it springs." [1] Thus, if it is God's holy and perfect Will that human beings should work out their salvation in a world where they have to struggle against pain, because this may be turned into a peculiarly potent instrument of salvation, it must also, somehow, be God's holy and perfect Will that this and that individual should have a conflict with pain at this and that point of their lives.

It is, indeed, extraordinarily difficult to speak at all of God's Providence, of His appointments for us day by day, without passing into unreality. We are almost sure to think of a rigid, fore-ordained plan decreed from all eternity, or of a piecemeal doling out of joys and pains to us hour by hour to teach us certain "lessons." This is because it is difficult not to think of God in terms of human temporal experience. We must remember that in this realm we can only speak haltingly with human analogies, and we must beware of taking half-truths for whole truths, and rigidly drawing unwarranted conclusions. There was a time when the sufferer would have been counselled to apply the doctrine of Providence to his own individual case in some such reflection as the following: "God has sent this chastisement upon me to teach me some lesson, and I must

[1] A. G. Hogg, *Redemption from this World*, p. 157.

try to discover what that lesson is, why I need this chastisement, what God's purpose is in thus afflicting me." But Christian faith to-day would feel such counsel to be intolerably crude, and would repudiate such an attitude as morbid. Many a spiritual counsellor of to-day would rather say something like this: "The pain and disablement which you suffer are contrary to God's plan, and the forces of His Kingdom are always working to drive such evils out of the world. He is indeed omnipotent, but having created beings with free wills, He cannot, without destroying their freedom, always intervene to save individuals at a stroke from the evils which have thus come into their lives. He works through the long education of the human race in faith and love. Therefore, while you exercise your faith in the overcoming of your disease, you will also, so far as it continues, face your sufferings with courage, loyalty, and joy, rising above a selfish individualism, accepting your share of the suffering which is involved in man's corporate struggle onward and upward, and which God also bears." Now, that is noble counsel. But is it complete? If it is given as complete, does it not leave the sufferer with the miserable feeling that his own individual fortunes are out of God's hands—that while there is a divine Sympathy, and even a divine Purpose, there is no kind of divine Providence watching over the individual and embracing all the vicissitudes of his life? And why should not the individual's faith claim such a Providence, even in the midst of sickness and suffering, if it is really true that these can become to us the occasion of greater spiritual good than we could have without them?

5. But is not such faith very different from the faith which our Lord expected people to exercise against their diseases? And is it not very different from the kind of faith which could be expected to aid recovery? How (it is sometimes asked nowadays) can a sufferer set himself to get rid of his disease, how can he exercise the prayer and the faith that will help to cure him, if he is possessed by the idea that suffering may somehow be part of a divine Plan for our good? We are here on difficult ground, where it is

almost impossible to speak without the risk of misapprehension. Let us remember, however, that the faith which we have been attempting to describe is something very far apart from any morbid acceptance of suffering as desirable in itself, and rests entirely on the paradox that suffering can be used for our spiritual good only so long as we feel it to be in itself bitter and hateful and evil. " Jesus," says Baron von Hügel, " cures pain and disease as though they could not be utilised, whilst Jesus also trains and empowers souls to utilise their sufferings, as though they were incurable." [1] Surely there need not, in practice, be any conflict between the two attitudes. If a sufferer, while eager for the recovery of health, has also a deep and wide faith in a God whose Purpose for our good even includes the mysterious discipline of pain, may not this faith produce a more peaceful, joyful, health-giving frame of mind than can be produced by the faith that only agonizes for recovery? Is it not the latter that is in danger of degenerating from being a perfect faith in God into being merely a feverish will-to-health (that *Will* which is so much less potent than the *Imagination*), while the former remains calmly convinced not of the certainty of recovery, but of the invincible loving Purpose of God which can control all the forces of disease for the good of those who trust in Him, whether in life or in death. This does not mean that the true Christian sufferer will constantly be thinking of the good that his suffering is doing to his soul. But through all his sickness, all his eager battling against it by ordinary medical means and by the prayer of faith, he will know well that there are greater evils than suffering, and greater goods than bodily health; and he will by Christian faith be very sure of the perfect Will and Purpose of God who makes all things work together for good to those that love Him. May not this imaginative conviction that God is all the time doing him good with " never-failing skill " be an indispensable element in the true *fides salvifica*, which is effectual for the healing of the body as well as for the saving of the soul?

[1] *Essays and Addresses*, 2nd series, p. 200.

6. But how can this kind of faith possibly be applied to those sufferings and troubles which are directly due to human wrong-doing? If certain courses of action are wrong, and contrary to God's will, precisely because they inflict suffering and trouble on other people, how can these victims be expected in any sense to regard their troubles as proceeding from God's Will and Purpose for them? Yet otherwise, where is our faith in God's providential care over us?

Let us imagine that a mother is mourning the death of her little boy who has been killed in a railway accident, directly due to the culpable negligence of the engine-driver. It would not have happened but for that man's failure to discharge his duties in accordance with God's will, and all are agreed that he ought to be censured or punished, and that every precaution must be taken against such occurrences, precisely because human life is so precious, and premature and violent death is such a grievous evil. So far, all is clear and consistent. But can nothing more be said to the broken-hearted mother who has lost her little boy? Is it comforting to her to be told that it is all against God's will? Is it enough to tell her that God is full of sympathy? If she asks how God can allow such things to happen, can her spiritual counsellor only tell her that God's sovereignty is necessarily limited by human freedom to do wrong? The mother longs to believe that, somehow, *nothing* can interfere with God's wise and loving purpose for her and for her child, and that this sudden calamity is not really such an interference. Is this a vain longing, or one quite alien to genuine Christian faith? Canon Streeter writes: "As an explanatory theory, the view of the old *theology* that sickness or calamity is a characteristic expression of the will of God we must discard; but the practical moral which the old *religion* drew from it was, up to a point—though only up to a point—quite sound. . . . But the right attitude to adopt is, to my mind, far better described if instead of 'submission' we say 'acceptance.' Mere submission to the will of an external power is negative, it is a dull, drab thing; but *acceptance* of a share, still more the willing acceptance of more than our full share, in the

tragedy of life—a tragedy in which God as well as man is an actor—is positive, it has about it something vitalising." [1] Yes, but surely Christian faith in God means even a more positive and vitalizing kind of acceptance than this ; for it regards God as more than simply an actor in the tragedy, involved in its disasters like the rest of us, or sympathizing with us. A spiritual counsellor may speak to the bereaved mother of the divine sympathy, and of the divine grace which can help her to bring good out of this great evil, and of the nobility of accepting with God this burden of suffering caused by human sin ; but cannot he speak to her of God's unfailing care over the individual ? Is her God to be but a great Comrade whose purposes or hopes for her are at the mercy of accidents and human misdeeds ? Has she to be content with a second-best, a makeshift kind of compensation, while God's real purpose for her and for her child was something different and better ? Here we are, indeed, obliged to use words which are inadequate to their great subject, but surely it is the authentic voice of Christian faith that whispers deep down in the mother's heart—deeper than all her deep and noble sorrow—a more positive kind of assurance regarding God's wise and loving will for her and for her child.

Let us next imagine a case in which there is something like a voluntary choice of suffering and danger in the service of humanity. Let us take the case of a Christian missionary looking into " the bright eyes of danger," setting out upon an expedition in which he will be exposed to the greatest perils from natural causes and especially from savage tribes. He goes forward with a quiet mind, trusting absolutely in God. What does such faith mean ? Certainly not that he is perfectly sure no harm will come to him, for he cannot have that assurance. Our Lord did encourage His disciples to believe that, in some sense, they could " tread on serpents and scorpions " in the service of the Kingdom without injury ; and was not such a faith precisely the secret of a life like that of Mary Slessor in Nigeria, to whom a medical doctor once said : " You ought by ordinary

[1] B. H. Streeter, *Reality*, p. 248.

rule to have been dead long ago" ? Yet other missionaries have been prematurely cut off by disease or violence, and we cannot say that they had less faith. No, the missionary cannot have the assurance that no harm will come to him, just as our Lord had not, and could not have, that assurance in His hour of danger. Does the missionary's faith, then, mean simply that it does not matter what happens to his body, that the savages may torture or kill his body, but this cannot affect his true and inward welfare, which is independent of anything that can happen to him ? No, that would be more like Stoicism than like Christian faith. The Christian missionary will not pretend that his body does not matter ; and, moreover, he will be thinking not only of his own inward welfare, but (like our Lord and St. Paul when death threatened them) of the work he has to do and how it will be affected by his death or disablement. Does his faith, then, mean simply a joyful willingness to accept whatever may come, because it is all in the service of the Kingdom, the suffering is part of the price that has to be paid for the redemption of mankind, and, whatever happens, God will be with him ? That is indeed a noble attitude, and this reminds us that we shall never understand what the true Christian attitude to the ills of life is until we rise in our thinking above a narrow individualism and regard our sufferings in a larger and more unselfish view. And yet, surely *Christian faith* has something more to say. The individual may nobly accept his sufferings because they are involved in the upward struggle of humanity, and he is willing to sacrifice himself for the race. Yet in so doing, he does not really "lose his life," but in the deepest sense "saves it." And does not this mean, in the last analysis, that *God* never sacrifices the individual to the race ? In spite of all the sin and wrong of the universe, which is so much against God's will, and which may involve His servants in such suffering and danger when they go forth for the redemption of humanity, these are nevertheless continually in God's hands, so that, in some deep sense, nothing can happen to them apart from His will. Our Lord said to His disciples in similar circumstances : "Are

not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." [1] If this means anything, it must mean that God's government of the world is not such as to leave the individual to face, bravely and desperately, whatever may happen to him through human wrong-doing around him, but is an unfailing and individualizing care, to which, if we had perfect faith, we could absolutely confide ourselves. Thus the missionary, going forward into danger, does not know what evil may befall him, since he is going into the midst of savage people who have little knowledge of, or regard for, God's will; and he will take every precaution (short of turning aside from his unselfish duty) to avert danger; yet he has the assurance that nothing can come to him in the path of duty which is not (though perhaps in itself an evil) somehow part of God's best and deepest, richest and longest, Purpose for him. Surely there is here something without which Christian faith would not be itself at all.

7. It seems, indeed, impossible to think this out quite consistently, for how can those fortunes which befall us as a direct result of human malevolence or selfishness around us, be regarded by faith as in any sense sent by God? And yet we must contemplate some such paradox unless we are prepared to give up the idea of Providence altogether; since the whole fortunes of our lives from day to day are directly and indirectly dependent on the moral choices of other people, many of whom are living and choosing in opposition to God's will. Providence has, of course, often been conceived in a hopelessly crude and childish way, as if God's purposes could be mapped out on the analogy of human plans; and so people have sometimes spoken of God as ordaining certain men to sin, hardening their hearts against Himself for His own purposes. That is but another example of the fatal tendency to hold so consistently to God's sovereign power as to sacrifice something of His goodness and love. But we must not, in a desire for consistency and simplifica-

[1] Matt. $10^{29ff.}$ (Luke $12^{6f.}$).

tion, fly to the other extreme either, and content ourselves with saying that God has limited Himself by creating men with wills that are free to do evil. For if we take that to be the whole truth and work it out consistently we shall reduce God to the position of having no control over our fortunes except in so far as He successfully exercises a moral influence upon the various people whose choices react upon our lives. On this view faith could not reasonably sing: "My times are in Thy hand," but could only make the best of each situation as it arose. A man might then even have to tell himself that his very existence was contrary to God's will, if he was born as the result of sin on the part of his parents. In *The Scarlet Letter* we find poor Hester Prynne wondering whether her child could really be said to have been sent by God at all—"that little creature, whose innocent life had sprung, by the inscrutable decree of Providence, a lovely and immortal flower, out of the rank luxuriance of a guilty passion." [1] There has often been a tendency to treat such offspring as if they were not God's creatures, but it is, of course, an utterly unchristian tendency; and this is the *reductio ad absurdum*, to teach us that it is impossible to work out any simple and consistent theory without giving up, not merely the abstract notion of absolute omnipotence which people are now so willing to sacrifice, but every idea of divine Providence upon which faith really longs to rest amid the vicissitudes of life.

V

The truth seems to be that when we endeavour to reduce Christian faith to an extreme simplicity, so that there remains no "mystery of suffering," but only a repudiation of it as an enemy of God and man, we are in danger of leaving out something which is vital to religion.[2] The true logical consequence of this line of thought, taken by itself in all

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, ch. vi.

[2] Cf. Baron von Hügel: "The religious sense, at its deepest and in the long run, will not, must not, be restricted to the Self-limited Creative God" (*Essays and Addresses*, 2nd series, p. 206).

its narrow consistency, would be something like Mr. Bernard Shaw's religion, of which we spoke above: a religion whose divinity "is omnipotent only in the sense that there seems no limit to its final achievement"; a religion of time which is in no sense a religion of eternity; a religion which can only point us forward to a better time on earth and call us to work with the evolutionary process for its coming, but cannot offer us any deep secret of joy and peace amid life's evils. This religion of evolution, in its various forms, is probably the main force with which Christian apologetics will have to reckon in the coming generation. However much we may learn from it, or (more especially) from the somewhat kindred Christian voices to which we have in this chapter listened with so much profit, faith is here in danger of becoming, not richer, but poorer; in danger even of leaving out altogether the specifically *religious* consolation. Religion must, indeed, always be false to itself when it even tends to make people indifferent to the temporal ills of our human lot, or content with suffering in their own lives; for it is never these evils in themselves, but faith's victory over them, always regarded as evils, that can lead the soul into a deeper blessedness. But then this victory, this deeper blessedness, is something more than the joy of suffering fought against and banished, for it may come even when the suffering is not banished. And it is a deeper joy than would be possible if we believed that our pains and bereavements were simply and sheerly the work of a hostile kingdom of evil which frustrates God's will for us. The religious soul finds that to be poor consolation, and claims something better. We may venture gratefully to quote the impressive testimony given by Dean Inge in the beautiful little book which sprang out of his own experience of bereavement in the death of a little daughter after a long illness. "When we see an innocent and precious life struck down, with all its promise unfulfilled, are we tempted to say, 'An enemy hath done this'?" His answer to this theory is: "I do not think we are even tempted to take it to ourselves when the sorrow of bereavement comes very near to us." "I think that it is when

we contemplate the affliction of others, rather than our own, that we murmur to ourselves, ' A good God could not have sanctioned such cruelty.' " [1] Christian faith, when really tried, will not give up the conviction that somehow " all things are of God." [2] Its desire is not merely for the friendship and help of a great Comrade in the battle against evil : its desire is for the Eternal God, our Everlasting Refuge and Home, the Perfection of Joy and Peace and Love. It is not enough for me to believe that as each situation arises God will help me to play the man in it, accepting the pain as part of the price of mankind's upward struggle, and so becoming a willing fellow-worker and fellow-sufferer with God Himself. That is indeed a great and beautiful belief. But it is not the whole truth. Full Christian faith claims something else too—the complementary truth which is signified (however imperfectly) by the old notion of the Impassibility of God. Underneath all the suffering there is a divine perfection of joy and peace, a reconciliation in which all suffering is overcome and transfigured and finds its place in God's " Immemorial Plan," an eternal reality of God's Kingdom raised far above the changing fortunes of the great campaign, so that even while the tide of battle ebbs and flows in this world, souls can be conceived as passing into a perfect fruition of God. There is here something which we cannot give up if God is to be God for us at all, and if religion is to do the real work of religion.

We have imagined some cases of faith dealing with disaster ; but at this climax of our argument it will be helpful to remember (though with necessarily disproportionate brevity) that Christian faith has always claimed to deal, not only with our pains and sorrows, but, above all, with our sins. For it is here, above all, that we seem to need something more than the sympathy of a great Comrade or Leader. This is certainly where the difficulty of

[1] W. R. Inge, *Personal Religion and the Life of Devotion*, pp. 87 f.

[2] Cf. the following saying of Mère Marie de la Providence (1825–71) : " In all things I can only see God alone ; and, after all, that is the only way to be happy. If once we begin to look at secondary causes, there is an end of peace " (quoted by Baron von Hügel, *Eternal Life*, p. 374).

reconciliation becomes most acute, because sin is by its very definition contrary to God's will. Yet it is just here that the need is greatest, to believe in a God who cannot only win us back from our evil ways and make the best of the evil we have wrought, but in some sense blot out our past sins, drown them in His mercy, turn our sorrow for them into the joy of forgiveness. But how can there be a real forgiveness of sins, which will be of any real comfort to the penitent, unless he can by faith rise up to lose himself in the love of a God who is not simply a great Comrade, but in some sense the very Source of the moral law which has been broken? Only such a forgiveness can ever enable a man to forgive himself: a justification which lifts a man above "mere morality" into the ultimate reconciliation of religion, "the righteousness which is of God by faith." "One day," says John Bunyan, "as I was passing into the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, *Thy Righteousness is in Heaven*. . . . Now I could look from myself to Him, and would reckon, that all those Graces of God that were now green on me were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence-half-pennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home." There was much that was morbid in Bunyan's broodings, but, after all, it was this doctrine that saved him from them and gave health to his soul: this faith in a divine righteousness which can somehow, in all its perfection, be claimed as ours, though we are sinful ("so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, *He wants My Righteousness*, for that was just before Him." [1]) And it can hardly be denied that this faith, instead of making people morally indifferent, has had a singular power of producing moral goodness. Just as in the case of sickness we suggested that the really health-giving faith may be that which goes beyond the will-to-health and rests utterly upon God, so in the case of sin, it is not by a merely

[1] John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, pp. 229–32. Bunyan is here speaking of Christ as our Righteousness.

" moralistic " attitude that we can most successfully overcome it, but by a faith which looks away from our own sin to God's reconciling righteousness. Not that sin can ever be accepted as in any sense from the will of God : sin is always His enemy. Yet there is here something more than faith in God's power to help us in the battle against sin, or to bring some good out of the evil we have wrought by our sins : there is faith in the *forgiveness* of sins, in an atonement which is in the very heart of God ; and it is this which has always, more than anything else, given Christians moral victory. It has, of course, always had its " antinomian " dangers. But this is simply another case of a religious doctrine passing into unreality by forgetting its moral foothold. Here, again, we have two strains of truth which cannot be quite reconciled (for justification by faith seems to contradict morality), and which must nevertheless be constantly held together, since either becomes false if separated from the other. This is the paradox which runs right through the life of faith : the " polarity " between the campaign for the establishing of the Kingdom, with all its defeats and uncertainties, and the eternal reality and victory of the Kingdom, which is the foundation of all mental health and peace. To think of the latter alone is to deny the reality of evil, and to give up the depth and richness of Christian theism for a pantheistic absolutism, with its " airy and shallow optimism," and this is the greatest danger of all. But to think of the former alone, or, if we use the word " Absolute " at all, to say that God is not the Absolute, is to give up something equally vital to Christian theism—the counsel of God which standeth for ever and His Kingdom which cannot fail.[1] There is always a tension between these two apparent irreconcilables, but

[1] Mr. C. C. J. Webb says : " I feel convinced that when once a stage of intellectual development has been reached at which the question of the relation of God to the Absolute would arise, no conception of God which takes him for less than the ultimate Reality will satisfy the demands of the religious consciousness " (*God and Personality*, pp. 137 f.). Cf. Professor W. E. Hocking : " I do not say that the Absolute is equivalent to God ; I say that God, whatever else he may be, must needs also be the Absolute " (*The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 206).

without this tension the one would sink helplessly to earth and the other would fly up into the clouds of abstraction. Must not both of them have a place in the true *fides salvifica* which gives the victory over the world, tending to make our bodies healthy, but, above all and through all, saving our souls from sin ?

VI

We have already acknowledged that the " newer " voice of Christian faith is in some respects a wonderfully true echo of the actual original Gospel of Jesus, to which it desires to be so loyal. But by this time we have begun to observe that, taken by itself in all its clearness, it is a much thinner voice than that of the original Gospel, which certainly possessed its element of paradox. If anything has become clear in the long controversy over the meaning of the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus, it is this : that no logically simple and consistent account of the Kingdom can be worked out from His sayings, with their imaginative symbols of an ineffable reality.[1] The Kingdom is spoken of, now as a thing already present or gradually developing, now as a thing lying absolutely in the future, to come suddenly one day as a gift of God. Sin and suffering are regarded as the work of Satan and as evidences of his dominant power, against which God's servants have to fight, and which the coming of the Kingdom will destroy ; and this dualistic aspect is much emphazised to-day. " Nevertheless," says a high authority, " this dualism plays only a superficial part in the teaching of Jesus, and belongs to the traditional forms under which He thought rather than to His own conception. He never ceased to regard the world as even now governed by God, who clothes the grass of the field and cares for the sparrows. He discerned in the present the operation of the same Divine laws that will prevail hereafter, and connected even suffering and death with the will of God. . . . God's will is accomplishing itself even now, in spite of all the powers that are seeking to frustrate it ; and when the Kingdom comes it will reign

[1] See J. H. Leckie, *The World to Come*, pp. 52–62.

without hindrance in a renovated world." [1] As for its coming, our Lord does sometimes seem to imply that it can be hastened by human faith, which can work the works of God in conquering all evils.[2] But again, on the other hand, the Kingdom is regarded as absolutely independent of anything that anyone can do, coming by God's appointment like the lightning which none can control or the growth of the corn which none can hasten. It is not being delayed by men's lack of faith or by the opposition of the forces of evil. It has its hour, like everything else in the universe, by the appointment of God's will. All this is somewhat different from the logical simplicity of the "newer" view, with its tendency to limit the sway of God's will.

As regards the prayer of faith, too, we find the same kind of paradox in the teaching of our Lord. Johannes Weiss has pointed out that there is a kind of contradiction between the parables of importunate prayer for boons, and the passage which warns us against the idea that our prayers will be heard if only we repeat them enough and assures us that God knows what we need before we ask Him. "Here we find side by side two different religious attitudes: the naïve, childlike piety which ventures with unshakable trustfulness to take the Father's Heart by storm, and the clear, calm confidence which knows itself to be always safe in God's Hand, and lets Him rule. Both forms of religion will always be found alongside of each other in the Church of Jesus, and both can appeal to Him." [3] Perhaps it would be truer to say that these are but different aspects—each saving the other from a false and one-sided simplicity—of the faith which Jesus commended and of all true Christian faith.

It is certainly a striking fact that in all His extensive intercourse with sufferers our Lord never (so far as the Synoptic Gospels tell us [4]) spoke of suffering as an expression of God's will. But are we not justified in saying that

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, p. 100.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 138 ff.
[3] *Die Schriften des N.T.*, i. 466. See Matt. $6^{7ff.}$, Luke $11^{5ff.}$ $18^{1ff.}$.
[4] As regards the Fourth Gospel, see John $9^{1ff.}$ 11^{4}.

He did begin so to think and speak of suffering when He saw it coming to Himself? This, indeed, was not sickness, but suffering voluntarily accepted in a noble cause. Yet our Lord did not choose the defeat and suffering in themselves, deliberately and intentionally getting Himself condemned to death. He rather saw the danger arising in the path of duty and shrank from it, but yet went forward in faith. There is a strange similarity, and also a deep contrast, between this and the faith with which Socrates faced death. In both cases there is the element of paradox: the action of the judges was wicked, and yet the thing itself was somehow the will of God. Socrates was anxious to prevent his judges from sinning against God by condemning him; and yet, at the same time, he was sure that, so far as *his* fate was concerned, this thing must be good, since God would not let any real evil come to him.[1] But in the case of our Lord the paradox is much deeper. For He did not make light of death. Socrates (who was, however, we must remember, an old man) said it must be a mistake to regard death as an evil, and he spoke of *the body* as if its death were of no account at all.[2] But our Lord, though He had told men not to fear those who could only kill the body, and was supremely unafraid of them Himself, spoke at the last about the breaking of His body in words which have shed a sacramental light on everything physical; and He shrank from His approaching death: not merely, of course, from the physical pain and dissolution, but still more from the terrible tragedy of being condemned to a criminal's death at the instigation of His own people, and thus ending His mission in worse than failure. It was impossible for Him to separate the thought of His own good from the thought of the people whom He had tried to serve. Thus from every point of view it was impossible for our Lord in Gethsemane to feel, with any Stoical kind of resignation, that it did not matter what happened to His body: His faith was something quite different from that. He shrank from the bitter cup, and prayed that He might be spared the drinking of it. He *could*, almost to the end, have

[1] Plato, *Apology*, 30, 40. [2] Plato, *Apology*, 40; *Phædo*, 115.

escaped by giving up His public work and so ceasing to trouble the authorities; but He knew, as Socrates also knew,[1] that such could not be God's will for Him: such a way out did not come into the reckoning at all. It was God's will that He should go forward in the path of duty and love, and face whatever should come, and God would be with Him in the evil hour. But was that all? Would not that, by itself, have been a smaller faith than the faith of Socrates, who was so sure of his interests being absolutely in God's hands? Nay, our Lord, who felt even more deeply than Socrates the sin of His judges, and shrank far more than Socrates from the tragedy, had also, underneath all this, an absolute faith in God: not merely in a God who would be with Him in the worst that might come, and who, if death should come, could give Him the victory over death, but—deeper still—in a God who *could do anything*, and who, if it was not His will that His Son should be put to death, would save Him, though it should be by sending "more than twelve legions of angels."[2] Nothing could happen to Him without His Father's will; and so, if suffering and death should come to Him in the doing of His Father's will, then it must be His Father's will that He should suffer and die: that must be part of God's great and glorious Purpose for Him and for the world. Words must fail us here. But this was how our Lord's faith expressed itself in the crisis: "Father, all things are possible unto thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what thou wilt."[3] Is not that the very consummation of faith in God?

Thus the Cross of Christ became for all time the supreme symbol of faith's paradox. The Crucifixion was the worst and saddest thing that ever happened through the wickedness of men, yet also the best and most glorious thing that ever happened through the wisdom and power and love of God. Dante thus expressed the paradox:

> "God and the Jews rejoiced in that same death,
> Thereat earth shuddered and heaven opened."[4]

[1] Plato, *Apology*, 28 ff., 37 ff.
[2] Matt. 26^{53}.
[3] Mark 14^{36}.
[4] Dante, *Paradiso*, vii. 47 f.

It was the Passion of Christ that thus became a crucial instance, driving Christian faith, from its very beginnings in the New Testament, not only to regard suffering more than ever as an evil and an enemy against which God calls us to fight, but also, paradoxically, to find room for the mystery of suffering in God's holy and perfect and acceptable Will and Purpose for our good. Christianity "pointed to Jesus with the terror of death upon Him in Gethsemane; with a cry of desolation upon the Cross on Calvary; it allowed the soul, it encouraged the soul, to sob itself out. It not only taught men frankly to face and to recognise physical and mental pain, death, and all other, especially all moral evils and sufferings as very real; it actually showed men the presence and gravity of a host of pains, evils and miseries which they had, up to then, quite ignored, or at least greatly minimised. And yet, with all this—in spite of all such material for despair, the final note of Christianity was, and is still, one of trust, of love, of transcendent joy. It is no accident, but of the very essence of the mystery and of the power of faith, it springs from the reality of God and of His action within men's souls, that, as the nobly joyous last chapters of Isaiah (chap. xl. to the end) contain also those wondrous utterances of the man of sorrows, so also the serenity of the Mount of Beatitudes leads, in the Gospels, to the darkness of Calvary." [1]

VII

We have not succeeded in giving any very simple and definite answer to our question as to the essential purport of the claim of Christian faith, but have rather been reminded that we are here in a region in which we cannot get rid of antinomy without sacrificing depth and richness; so that the danger is that of undue simplification, of hastening to a logical simplicity in which our minds can idly rest. A healthy faith will always be acknowledging the antinomy, yet always also struggling against it, striving for a fuller light and a deeper experience in which the paradox will be

[1] Baron von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses*, 1st series, p. 112.

less acute.[1] In the past the mistake has probably sometimes been that of accepting the antinomy too complacently, as an *asylum ignorantiæ*, with the result that faith became too quiescent, lapsing unawares into an attitude which made predestination mechanical, and progress and struggle unreal; really leaving out one side of the truth in its lip-service to the doctrine of the antinomy; making a solitude and calling it peace. Against this too indolent, and really faithless, attitude, the Christian thought of our time has presented, as we have seen, a healthy reaction. But it is in danger of going to the other extreme, too impatient of antinomies. Miss Dougall avowedly made it one of her aims to get rid of the complications of traditional Christian teaching, and to "reduce our religious theories to a God-like simplicity."[2] But the matter is not really as simple as those imagine who think to work out a satisfying view of Christian faith on the assumption that suffering can never have any place in the Will and Purpose of God; and the ultimate result of such an attempt would be to limit God and to impoverish faith. This was, of course, far from the intention of Miss Dougall, and, indeed, she was not blind to the paradox.[3] But it is exceedingly interesting to be told by Canon Streeter that, towards the end of her life, her thought on these matters underwent development, under the stimulus of criticism, and that she was feeling her way to a profounder philosophy than that presented in most of her books.[4]

There are two deep thinkers of our time who may be taken as providing the required corrective, by insisting that the very strength of Christianity is in its firm and living grasp of apparent opposites. The one is the late Baron von Hügel (so often quoted already in these pages), who has greatly served the cause of religious thought by always refusing to sacrifice depth and richness to simplification.

[1] Cf. Dean Inge (following Bradley): "Faith is the felt unity of unreduced opposites" (*Faith and its Psychology*, p. 235).

[2] *Absente Reo*, p. 65.

[3] See especially her *Christian Doctrine of Health*, ch. xx.

[4] See Canon Streeter's Foreword to her posthumous work, *God's Way with Man*, p. 20.

He often reminded us that the highest religion must be not only a religion of time and progress, but a religion of eternity; that it requires not only "successiveness," but "simultaneity"; that it must insist both on the terrible reality of evil and on the complete victory of the good.[1] True Christianity, in firmly holding both these parts of the truth, has indeed failed to reach a quite simple and consistent theory, or a *prima facie* optimism; but it has something better, a practical secret of peace and joy, a "Preliminary Pessimism and Ultimate Optimism." "Theism, no more than any other outlook, really explains Evil; but it alone, in its fullest, Jewish-Christian forms, has done more, and better, than explain Evil: it has fully faced, it has indeed greatly intensified, the problem, by its noble insistence upon the reality and heinousness of Sin; and it has then overcome all this Evil, not indeed in theory, but in practice, by actually producing, in the midst of deep suffering and through a still deeper faith and love, souls which are the living expression of the deepest beatitude and peace."[2] The other contemporary thinker who helps us here is Albert Schweitzer, the medical missionary. There is surely wisdom in his contention that the strength of Christianity lies in its putting the requirements of moral faith before those of logical simplicity. "Compared with the logical religions of the East, the Gospel of Jesus is illogical. It presupposes a God who is an ethical Personality, and who is therefore, so to speak, outside the world. When trying to answer questions as to the relation between this ethical Personality and the forces at work in the world, Christianity cannot rise above the mist. It must hold fast the belief that God is the sum-total of the forces working in the world—that all that is, is in God. So far, therefore, Christianity, too, is obliged to think on monistic and pantheistic lines. And yet it does not rest satisfied with conceiving God as the sum-total of the forces that are active

[1] See *Eternal Life*, ch. xiii.; *The Mystical Element of Religion*, new ed. vol. ii. chs. xiii.–xv.

[2] *Essays and Addresses*, 1st series, pp. 93 ff. See also pp. 130 ff. and *Mystical Element*, ii. 358 ff.

in the world, for the God of monism and of pantheism—the God of Nature philosophies—is impersonal and has no ethical character. For this reason, Christianity accepts all the difficulties of the dualistic view; it is ethical theism and apprehends God as a Will that is distinct from the world and compels us not to conform to the world." [1] Thus Christianity has never succeeded in logically explaining the universe, but this apparent *naïveté* of accepting antinomy and paradox is really profundity. Christianity cannot definitely choose between pessimism and optimism: it is neither, or rather, it is both together; and its strength lies in its willingness to sacrifice the requirements of logical consistency rather than those of moral faith.

This seems to be the natural crown of our whole argument in this book. We have been seeing throughout that faith has its ultimate entrenchment in our moral convictions, and arises not out of the logical attempt to explain the world, but out of our absolute values. We have seen that, while morality thus involves us in religion, this realm of religion can never be described except by inadequate symbols, and its beliefs cannot be thought out without contradiction. Whatever we say about God and His ways can only be half-truths, expressed haltingly in our poor, human language. Having seen all this, and found that the saints have seen it, we shall not now be surprised if we find Christian faith unable to describe God's purposes without paradox and antinomy. Above all, we shall not be content to solve the paradox by sacrificing anything which our moral faith demands: that would be to attain a shallow simplicity by forgetting all that we learned as to what faith is and how it finds its last entrenchment in the intimations of our moral consciousness. So we will rest neither in pessimism nor in a shallow and easy optimism; nor yet in an "evolutionary meliorism" somewhere between the two. We will rather rejoice in an "optimism which is grounded in pessimism," acknowledging the terrible reality of evil, yet committing our way entirely to the personal God of infinite power and wisdom and love who is revealed

[1] Albert Schweitzer, *Christianity and the Religions of the World*, pp. 74 f.

to us in the Gospel of Jesus as our Father. That is the only kind of answer we can give to the question: What does Christian faith assert? And if there is paradox and antinomy in it, that is the strength of the Christian religion.

Not that we should ever lazily acquiesce in apparent contradiction. "A paradox is not a cushion on which to rest our mental indolence; it is the pledge of further vision, the promise that by practising both sides of the truth we shall solve what we cannot solve if we content ourselves with one side." [1] It is wholesome that the "newer" voice of Christian faith has awakened us to realize this. Christian faith dare not cease the effort to rise above half-truths and achieve a logical consistency, even if this ideal is, in the very nature of the case, impossible of attainment. We must be neither too impatient of antinomy nor too tolerant of it, if we are to advance to a clearer understanding of the deep Christian secret. Yet it is not altogether by thinking the matter out, but rather by living it out in daily Christian faith and love, that we shall arrive at a deeper insight in which the paradox will be less acute. And a book about faith cannot end better than upon this note of hope and expectation.

[1] L. Dougall, *Christian Doctrine of Health*, p. 147.

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THE KERR LECTURESHIP.

THE "KERR LECTURESHIP" was founded by the TRUSTEES of the late Miss JOAN KERR of Sanquhar, under her Deed of Settlement, and formally adopted by the United Presbyterian Synod in May 1886. In the following year, May 1887, the provisions and conditions of the Lectureship, as finally adjusted, were adopted by the Synod, and embodied in a Memorandum, printed in the Appendix to the Synod Minutes, p. 489.

On the union of the United Presbyterian Church with the Free Church of Scotland in October 1900, the necessary changes were made in the designation of the object of the Lectureship and the persons eligible for appointment to it, so as to suit the altered circumstances. And at the General Assembly of 1901 it was agreed that the Lectureship should in future be connected with the Glasgow College of the United Free Church. From the Memorandum, as thus amended, the following excerpts are here given :—

II. The amount to be invested shall be £3000.

III. The object of the Lectureship is the promotion of the Study of Scientific Theology in the United Free Church of Scotland.

The Lectures shall be upon some such subjects as the following, viz. :—

A. Historic Theology—

(1) Biblical Theology, (2) History of Doctrine, (3) Patristics, with special reference to the significance and authority of the first three centuries.

B. Systematic Theology—

(1) Christian Doctrine—(*a*) Philosophy of Religion, (*b*) Comparative Theology, (*c*) Anthropology, (*d*) Christology, (*e*) Soteriology, (*f*) Eschatology.

(2) Christian Ethics—(*a*) Doctrine of Sin, (*b*) Individual and Social Ethics, (*c*) The Sacraments, (*d*) The Place of Art in Religious Life and Worship.

Further, the Committee of Selection shall, from time to time, as they think fit, appoint as the subject of the Lectures any important Phases of Modern Religious Thought or Scientific Theories in their bearing upon Evangelical Theology. The Committee may also appoint a subject connected with the practical work of the Ministry as subject of Lecture, but in no case shall this be admissible more than once in every five appointments.

IV. The appointments to this Lectureship shall be made in the first instance from among the Licentiates or Ministers of the United Free Church of Scotland, of whom no one shall be eligible who, when the appointment falls to be made, shall have been licensed for more than twenty-five years, and who is not a graduate of a British University,

preferential regard being had to those who have for some time been connected with a Continental University.

V. Appointments to this Lectureship not subject to the conditions in Section IV. may also from time to time, at the discretion of the Committee, be made from among eminent members of the Ministry of any of the Nonconformist Churches of Great Britain and Ireland, America, and the Colonies, or of the Protestant Evangelical Churches of the Continent.

VI. The Lecturer shall hold the appointment for three years.

VII. The number of Lectures to be delivered shall be left to the discretion of the Lecturer, except thus far, that in no case shall there be more than twelve or less than eight.

VIII. The Lectures shall be published at the Lecturer's own expense within one year after their delivery.

IX. The Lectures shall be delivered to the students of the Glasgow College of the United Free Church of Scotland.

XII. The Public shall be admitted to the Lectures.

THE KERR LECTURES

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